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CONTENTS

Comments . . . . Page 1
The Shape of 1952 3
The Cost of Health 3
The Poetry of Money. By Giles Romilly . 4
A London Diary. By Critic 5
State Secret. By Sagittarius 5
This England 6
Milk Problem. By Dr. Somerville Hastings, M.P. 6
Lysenko and the Scientists—II. By Prof. C. H. Waddington 6
Conversations in Spain. By Stephen Aberdare 7

The Arts and Entertainment:

Radio Notes. By William Salter . . . 8
Conversation. By Desmond Shawe-Taylor . 8
Zoo. By Alan Ross 10
Correspondence 10
From Lady Simon of Wythenshawe; Marion Pascoe; Will Lawther; Michael Becker; A. R. Harris; M. R. D. Foot; Leonore Orr; Christopher Buckley; and R. W. G. Bryant.
Books in General. By Morchard Bishop Page 13

Reviews:

The Arabs. By Sir Ronald Storrs . . . 14
New Novels. By Walter Allen . . . 14
A Virtuoso. By H. R. Trevor-Roper . . 15
The Dance. By Beryl de Zoete . . . 16
People of the Age. By Geoffrey Grigson . 16
Fine Writing. By P. H. Newby . . . 17
Week-end Competitions 18

SABOTAGE AT UNO

From the tortuous and tragically ineffective proceedings of the Security Council over Christmas only the Australian, Syrian and Chinese delegates emerge with unimpaired credit: their attitude in condemning Dutch aggression in Indonesia and seeking a way to bring bloodshed to an end has throughout been honest and consistent. By blowing hot and cold; by first voting for a resolution enjoining a cease-fire and the immediate withdrawal of both sides to the truce line; by later declining to vote for a resolution demanding the recall of Dutch forces when it became clear that the Netherlands Government had done nothing to comply with the cease-fire order — by such vacillations the British and American delegations have made themselves appear futile, ridiculous and even cowardly. The Soviet delegate, Mr. Malik, managed to secure at any rate a reputation for political dexterity. His decision on Christmas Eve to abstain from voting for the Anglo-American resolution calling on both sides to withdraw was tactically clever: he evidently relied on the calculation that French and Belgian abstentions would defeat it; and when the Council resumed its deliberations after Christmas, he was able to argue that the authority of the United Nations was being defied by the Dutch and to pillory the Western Imperialist Powers for conniving at aggression when they, in turn, abstained from supporting the Soviet resolution, put forward on Monday, calling for Dutch withdrawal.

The Dutch, in short, have been allowed to flout the Security Council. The statement presented to the Council by Mr. van Royen on Monday consisted in substance of a declaration that the Netherlands Government intended to carry on with its policy in Indonesia and a claim that the "operational phase of the action" had now practically reached a successful conclusion. The Dutch delegate did not trouble to reply to the latest report of the Committee of Good Offices, which places squarely on Dutch shoulders the responsibility for the outbreak of hostilities; and he undertook merely that his Government would give "serious consideration" to the Council's compromise resolution of December 24 ordering a cease-fire. When Dr. Jessup, the U.S. delegate, said on Monday that he was not satisfied with this statement but needed "more time to consider the new situation," and when the British delegate, Mr. Falla, added that "it would be appropriate to wait and see what the Netherlands Government will eventually do," they played straight into the hands of Mr. Malik. Once again, on Tuesday, Colonel Hodgson and Dr. Hsia, speaking for Australia and China, argued that Dutch refusal at once to release the Indonesian Ministers, when called upon to do so by the Security Council, was merely contumacious; and Mr. Malik, pointing to Britain's abstention, could say that the Dutch were able to sabotage the Council because they knew that the Western Powers would not wish to endanger Holland's prestige.

The Dutch no doubt hope in a short time to argue that they have created in Indonesia a *fait accompli* which it would be impolitic to disturb—an argument which all three European colonial Powers, supposedly sitting in judgment on Dutch policy, may find it embarrassing to contradict. In Java all the big towns and important lines of communication appear already to have been occupied by Dutch forces, and Republican resistance is likely soon to be confined to small-scale, but probably protracted, guerrilla warfare. Yet if ever the Security Council had a chance to assert its authority it was in the Indonesian issue. Not merely was Dutch aggression undisguised and indisputable; the application of sanctions against the Netherlands in the form of cutting off Marshall Aid would have been easy, involving no risk of embroiling the world in a struggle between Great Powers. A cruel, perhaps a decisive, blow has been dealt at what remained of the authority of the United Nations.

Events do not stand still because the Powers wrangle and the Security Council fails to act. Leadership passes to other hands. Pandit Nehru's support for the Indonesian Republic is now strongly seconded by Thakin Nu, Premier of Burma; and a solid block of Asiatic Powers, including India, Pakistan and Ceylon, have now announced that they will not give passage to Dutch planes carrying war material to Indonesia. It looks as if one of the effects of Dutch "police action" will be to draw together the new nations of S.E. Asia and to increase their anti-Western tendency. That Britain should have contributed to this end is strange indeed; for Britain, after her wise withdrawal from India and Burma, was in a position to exercise a friendly and beneficent influence in South-East Asia. Mr. Bevin and the Foreign Office have apparently decided that this asset of goodwill is of less importance than that of the more extreme group of Dutch imperialists. It is an odd decision that may have great historic significance. The Indonesians and other awakened peoples of Asia must look for allies somewhere. If Britain prefers to side with their enemies, Asiatics will find other friends.

The Ruhr Authority

Good intentions certainly pave the Ruhr's prospective path. The International Authority, on whose draft constitution the Western Powers are now agreed, is to ensure not merely that the Ruhr's resources shall be used in future for peaceful, not aggressive purposes, but that their development and the distribution of their products shall be "co-ordinated" with the whole economy of Western Europe. The question is how far the Authority will be able in practice to reconcile the divergent views of its constituent members and, in particular, to satisfy American demands that Western Germany shall contribute its maximum to the strength of Western Union, while at the same time making reasonable concessions to French insistence that the war potential of the Ruhr must never again become a menace to European security. On paper, the French have succeeded to some extent in winning acceptance for their security demands. In carrying out its primary function—the division of Ruhr coal and coke between German consumption and export—the Authority will have the theoretical power to limit German steel production to any agreed level by cutting down the fuel available for the German steel industry. Some degree of "supervision over production, investment and development" is to be exercised even after the ending of the period of military control. The French, however, can scarcely fail to note the significant vagueness of the agreement in describing the agency which is to exercise this supervision. Quite apart from the fact that international ownership of the Ruhr has gone by the board, and that the future decision as to the ownership—public or private—of individual firms is to be left for decision by the Western German Government, it is obvious that no close or detailed inspection, such as [illegible] desired, is contemplated. The effectiveness of the Authority as the guardian of security will, of course, depend largely on the eventual terms of the Occupation Statute and on the charter (not yet known) of the Military Security Board which is to advise the Authority. Our first impression is that, if the Germans are co-operative, there are distinct possibilities for good in the Authority which is to be established, but that if, as seems likely from the immediate reaction of all the Western German political parties, the proposed Authority is resented and obstructed in Germany, the scheme will fail both to provide security and to promote economic co-operation. From the French standpoint, a serious objection to the plan is that, during the period of military control, Britain and France will enjoy an absolute majority of voting power on the Authority. When a Western German Government is established, the German representatives on the Authority, with their three votes, can still ensure that France and the Benelux countries are always in a minority should they oppose Anglo-American policy.

France Seeks Solvency

The French Assembly continued its traditional Budget wrangle up to Christmas. It has now restored the appropriations for capital investment to the level demanded by M. Monnet: if the cut had been maintained, it would have been difficult to persuade either the Americans or France's collaborators in E.R.P. that M. Queuille's administration—already in serious difficulties and vulnerable to any split in the Centre parties—was in earnest about the stiff measures essential to French recovery. There has been strong American pressure for a Budget, balanced at least on paper, which would make an effort to face the real economic problems of France instead of endeavouring primarily to conciliate the waverers in M. Queuille's coalition. A rather precarious balance has now been secured, by bringing in francs from the reconstruction fund controlled by the U.S.—and a further grant this week from the fund seems to signify American endorsement of the Budget—an internal loan, and the estimated receipts from an increase in taxes. M. Queuille, however, has accepted a Socialist amendment which seeks to raise revenue by a 25 per cent. increase in the production tax and a boost of 15 per cent. in all except direct taxes. The demand for higher income taxes, pressed hard by the Communists, has thus been evaded. Whether indirect taxation can yield the necessary revenue, without creating further inflationary pressure and adding to the difficulties of the working class, is another question.

Yugoslavia and Western Trade

The conclusion of a one-year trade agreement between Britain and Yugoslavia, which was signed just before Christmas, after negotiations which had lasted for over fifteen months, was evidently facilitated by an undertaking on the part of the Yugoslav Government to pay a considerably higher sum than they had previously offered (or had, indeed, been expected by the British Government) in compensation for British property affected by Yugoslav nationalisation measures. It had been thought that agreement would be reached on a figure of £4 million, whereas the sum now stipulated is £4,500,000, of which one-tenth is to be paid during the coming year. In the period up to September 30th, 1949, Yugoslav timber, wood products and some foodstuffs to a value of £15 million are to be exchanged for British textiles, chemicals, machinery and certain raw materials, including crude oil; and, in the course of the next nine months, negotiations are to be opened for the conclusion of a larger long-term trade agreement, which will incidentally lay down the rate at which the remainder of the compensation money is to be remitted. It would be quite wrong to suppose that the signature of this agreement denotes any re-orientation of Yugoslav economic or trading policy: trade with the West has always been desired in Belgrade, just as it is in Warsaw. It is clear, however, from the speech which Marshal Tito delivered on Boxing Day to the Yugoslav National Assembly, that the Government in Belgrade is being worried by the attitude of other Eastern European countries to trade with Yugoslavia and that the Marshal is determined to reinsure against the possibility of a Cominform economic boycott by securing, as far as possible, from the West the resources essential for the carrying-out of Yugoslavia's plan for the development both of mining and heavy industry.

Polish Party Merger

Well prepared in advance, the merger congress of the Polish Socialists and Polish Workers' Party held few surprises other than the somewhat unexpected election of Mr. Gomulka to the central Committee of the new United Workers' Party. It is hardly to be supposed that Mr. Gomulka's "Right-wing deviationism" has been forgiven and forgotten; indeed, President Bierut and others criticised him with some bitterness during the congress itself. Apart, however, from the fact that Mr. Gomulka is personally popular, it may be significant that indications emerged during the congress that the new Party's approach to the problem of land ownership and the collectivisation of agriculture will be on the cautious, gradualist lines for whose advocacy the former Secretary-General of the Workers' Party incurred Cominform displeasure. The most important declaration of policy made during the congress came from General Zawatski, who said that there must be an end to the "persecution" in schools of the children of non-Catholics, and that it was intolerable that "the people's State" should continue to be attacked by reactionary sections of the clergy. Possibly this speech foreshadows an all-out policy of secular education in Poland, similar to that recently adopted in Hungary; it certainly suggests a tougher phase of the battle to exclude the Church from politics.

Nokrashy Pasha

The assassination of the Egyptian Premier, Nokrashy Pasha, rounds off a sordid and unhappy year for his country. His death is laid at the door of the Moslem Brotherhood—a fanatical group he was driven finally to suppress only a month ago—which had inspired the murder of other Waafdist politicians, the heavy rioting last summer, and other terrorist acts. Nokrashy was killed partly because he had taken a moderate attitude towards the British in the negotiations over the Sudan and the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty; partly because his administration had made a fiasco of the Egyptian invasion of Israel. In a sense, he was the victim of his own policies. Though he, personally, may have had mild aspirations for social reform, he fell back on the traditional solution of ruling classes whose wealth and privileges are under attack by the rightly discontented; he diverted unrest at home into hostility against external enemies. His failure either to meet the domestic crisis or to achieve victory for Islam abroad was grist to the mill of the demagogues in the Brotherhood. His successor is unlikely to amend his basic policies: yet the situation in Egypt demands drastic social changes. Once again, where reforms have been too long withheld, a bogus revolutionary movement has appeared, turning the suffering of the people to its own account in the name of progress.

Aviation Deficits

The loss of nearly four million pounds, sustained by the three air-line corporations in the first half of the financial year, reflects primarily the technical difficulties, especially the lack of suitable and efficient aircraft, from which all three continue to suffer. To present the total deficit as an average loss for each passenger of some eight pounds is to conceal the real improvement made during the last year. British air-lines had a good summer, increasing the capacity ton-miles flown from 48 millions in the comparable period of 1947 to 68 million this year. At the same time, costs per capacity ton-mile have been cut by twenty-one per cent. Both in scope and in volume, our services have expanded—and have begun to secure the consequent economies. No one has expected an early surplus in operating expenses for the corporations as a whole; for to complete the reorganisation of our air-lines and to build up both freight and passenger demand take time, money and experience. Of the three corporations, British European has made the best progress. It has not been so seriously handicapped as British South American or British Overseas—which are both waiting for new planes designed for their special purposes—and it has developed a really good series of services to the Continent. In fact, its European operations came close to paying their way this summer, and may well return a surplus next year. B.E.A., however, must carry the cost of "utility" internal services and part of the losses of the Irish, the Maltese and Cyprus air-lines, of which it is part-owner. This, coupled with the bad flying weather and the Northolt strike this autumn, may push up its deficit for the winter months, when demand, in any case, falls off. But, as long as deficits for all our civil air operations can be held within these manageable and not unreasonable limits for the next year, when the supply of aircraft should improve and other helpful factors should come into play, the prospect for British aviation is encouraging. In the meantime it is a useful addition not merely to our "invisible" exports, but also to the promotion of British overseas trade as a whole.

Sheltered Wages

In any attempt to assess Britain's economic outlook in the coming year, a big factor which has to be considered is whether it will prove possible to keep the general level of wages more or less "pegged" without having production disturbed by industrial disputes and stoppages. Immediate omens are not very propitious: on the railways, in London Transport and in the Post Office engineering service, unsettled demands seem likely to lead to trouble, with a distinct possibility of unofficial strikes. Significantly, all three threatened disputes relate to occupations regarded in the inter-war period as "sheltered." Here, in fact, we have one of the difficulties caused by full employment—a difficulty which, in the absence of a general wages policy, the country has not yet faced. In the inter-war period, when the export industries were subject to recurrent and, in some cases, chronic unemployment, workers in the so-called "sheltered" trades were content to accept wages substantially lower than those current in more precarious occupations in return for the greater security which they enjoyed. To-day, the stable industries catering for relatively inflexible needs in the domestic market no longer hold that privileged position so far as security is concerned. Accordingly, the workers in them are becoming dissatisfied when they observe that the remuneration of labour in export trades, which appear at the moment to be equally immune from unemployment, is considerably higher than their own. The lower-paid grades of railway employees and, still more, the Post Office engineers, have a strong case; but to accept their demands would make it difficult to resist a further all-round increase in wages.

THE SHAPE OF 1952

So much of the content of Great Britain's "Long Term Programme" submitted to the Organisation for European Economic Co-operation had leaked out in advance that no surprises were to be expected when the White Paper was published last week. It is a document which will be read with mixed feelings: we may appreciate the skill and determination shown in the handling of an extremely difficult situation, but we are also sharply reminded that austerity must still be with us for as many years ahead as it is profitable to look.

The problem which had to be faced was that of bringing the British economy, by 1952-3, to a point at which this country could pay its way, and to approach this point by stages, making do each year with a smaller sum in dollar aid, and intensifying the export drive and every other possible means of paying for indispensable imports. The authors of the White Paper, though they stress the unavoidable uncertainty of most of their calculations, seem confident that the thing can be done—provided that other countries also play their part. But they hold out no prospect that, even when it has been done, Great Britain's difficulties will be over. There will remain, even on the most optimistic assumptions, a need drastically to restrict consumers' supplies, in order not only to keep total imports within limits we can afford but also to push exports to the greatest possible extent and to devote a high proportion of the total national products to urgent tasks of re-equipment and capital development.

This means that, even on the assumptions made in the Programme, imports in 1952-3 will be 15 per cent. less in volume than they were in 1938, despite the rise in population. It seems that, in the interests of social justice, food rationing, clothes rationing, and other restrictions on supply will still be needed, even if they will be relaxed in particular respects. It means that, for a long time to come, the balance of payments will be an acute problem, at any rate in terms of gold and dollars. Moreover, all this assumes that the planners' optimistic guesses will come off; that relative prices of imports and exports do not change to our disadvantage; that dollar markets will absorb a still larger volume of exports from Great Britain; that American aid will not be cut below the minimum that is asked for during the next few years; and that no world economic crisis upsets our calculations. It assumes, further, that we are not forced to accept conditions that will prevent us from bilateral bargaining aimed at securing essential supplies for fewer dollars.

Above all else, the Programme assumes that our own plans for economic recovery can be fitted into a pattern of Western European co-operation which will be acceptable to the United States. This may be difficult, as we have already good reason to know from the reception which the Programme has met with in France and elsewhere. Continental Europe is by no means reconciled to the prospect of having to buy more from Great Britain than Great Britain can buy in exchange, especially as the need to incur a further large deficit on purchases from the rest of the sterling area looks like making sterling, for Western Europe, a currency almost as scarce as dollars. The Programme admits this difficulty, but suggests that it can be avoided by means of Continental sales in excess of purchases to Eastern Europe and to other non-sterling, non-dollar areas, which will thus accumulate a supply of sterling by selling to Great Britain more than Great Britain sells to them. This brings out the indispensability of a recovery of West European exports to Eastern Europe; for, without this, no restoration of solvency in the West seems to be practicable at all, nor can there be any hope of Great Britain maintaining the level of her exports to Western Europe which the Programme postulates as an element in British recovery.

The British Programme, as its authors state, is to be regarded at this stage as only tentative; for, in order to make sense, or to comply with the conditions of American aid, it has yet to be linked with the programmes of the other eighteen countries in a master plan. The great question is whether this can be done as long as the prospects of trade between East and West in Europe can be only guessed at, and not planned with any confidence; for the Western countries will not be in a position to go on buying the British capital goods that are needed for their economic recovery unless they can pay for them largely by the sale of exports to Eastern Europe. It may be possible, as the French hope, to build up the trade in foodstuffs to Great Britain to a higher level, and thus to link the British and Continental economies more closely together; but this cannot possibly be done on a scale that will enable the Continental countries to finance their purchases from the whole sterling area unless they can pay largely by way of third-party trade. Herein lies the greatest difficulty in reconciling British with Continental plans—and also the most serious doubt concerning the realism of the British estimates of what can be achieved.

On the face of it, the demands made in the British plan for American aid during the remaining years of the Marshall Plan seem unduly modest, not only because of the severe austerity which is involved, but also because they allow no margin for failure of effective European demand for British goods. In this matter, however, the British draftsmen were probably not free agents. It is to be presumed that they were given in advance, by the Americans, a pretty clear notion of what they were to ask for if they wanted the U.S. Administration to back their demands before Congress. The continued austerity required of the British people and the assumption that general Western European recovery would proceed at an accelerating pace were probably American requirements, the responsibility for which cannot be laid at Sir Stafford Cripps' door. It would have been fruitless to put forward claims that we knew would not be backed by the American administrators of E.C.A. In these circumstances, our draftsmen were evidently forced to make optimistic assumptions; for on no others could they have drawn up a programme that looked like leaving us able to stand, by 1953, on our own feet.

Even with these assumptions, there remains a dollar deficit on current transactions that can be kept down to manageable proportions only by a large-scale diversion of trade to non-dollar areas. How greatly this will affect Canada must depend both on the success of the campaign for increased sales of British goods in the Canadian market and on the Canadians' own efforts to reduce their adverse balance with the United States. The other main aspect of the policy of diversion is that which is directed to a rapid expansion of colonial supplies, both to Great Britain and for sale to the dollar areas. Schemes of colonial development take a large part in the British long-term programme, and account for a high proportion of the capital exports contemplated both before and after the end of Marshall Aid. It seems to be envisaged, though it is nowhere explicitly said, that American capital will participate in this investment, and will thus help to ease the dollar problem. There are obvious dangers here, as American ideas of colonial investment may easily clash with the Government's colonial policy of care for native interests.

Altogether, the Long Term Programme, within its limits, is a very competent essay in the making of bricks without straw. It will, however, probably look substantially different by the time it has been worked into the pattern of a common programme for Western Europe; and if, as we have to expect, this process turns out to involve changes which will put less strain on the French and other Continental countries, it will almost certainly *pro tanto* make our dollar problem the more difficult, and call for more American help before we can put our house in order. This may not happen, if the French can perform the miracle of straightening out their finances and thus putting themselves in the way to make large adjustments in their economy; but that does not seem likely, and it is clear that we ought to go as far as we dare to make things easier for them. What we must not do is to make concessions without getting a *quid pro quo*—not from France, but from the United States. Even if, on the assumptions on which our Programme was drawn up, we could ask no more from the Americans, we can and must ask for enough to offset any sacrifices we are forced to make in order to help the economies of Western Europe. For, if we attempt too much for our limited resources, and consequently fail to achieve recovery, nothing is more certain than that the European plans as a whole will fail. Finally, it is clear beyond a doubt that the prospect of success depends on a big revival of trade between Eastern and Western Europe, and that no recovery plan can be made secure if it leaves this vital factor out of account.

THE COST OF HEALTH

The cost of the National Health Service will be much in excess of the estimates. By the end of the financial year (nine months' working of the Service) the cost, instead of being £180,000,000, will be over £225,000,000—an excess of over £1,000,000 a week. We doubt whether the Minister of Health will be much embarrassed by these figures: they are, in fact, both a measure of the success of the National Service and a revelation of the urgent need for it.

The irony is that the very violence of the B.M.A.'s opposition so well advertised the Service and increased its popularity (and its consequent expense) that by "vesting day," July 5, nine out of ten people had registered. To-day, over 97 per cent. of the 21,000 general practitioners and over 87 per cent. of the 10,000 dentists in England and Wales, and, in Scotland, 2,339 out of 2,386 G.P.'s and 1,000 out of 1,200 dentists, have joined the Service. The hospitals, which were taken over, have co-operated so energetically that their activities will account for at least 60 per cent. of the rise in costs.

The public, including the middle-class and the well-to-do, are taking full advantage of the scheme, while the doctors, though individuals grumble over details, are, as a profession, co-operating magnificently. Of course, there are instances of off-hand treatment and scamped work. Such cases attract attention, but they are rare indeed compared with the loyal service, under great difficulties, of the overwhelming majority of the doctors. There have been abuses of the Service by both doctors and patients, but, again, while loudly canvassed, they are a split fraction of total practice. For instance, there has been a great deal of talk about over-prescribing—stout and whisky and expensive and unnecessary drugs—but of 75,000,000 prescriptions dispensed so far only 1,000 prescriptions have been queried. Again, there have been complaints from doctors that patients are coming to them for prescriptions for free aspirins and purgatives; but, while it may be an excessive demand on busy practitioners and an avoidable charge of the public funds, the doctors have no professional right to resent it. They have been complaining of "self-medication" for years and here, in the long run, is the chance to curb it and substitute proper treatment. The run on the chemists is certainly higher than was anticipated. Instead of the budgeted 2,700,000 prescriptions a week, they are averaging 3,000,000. This increase is substantial but by no means alarmingly high in proportion to the total cost of the scheme.

Some may say that the cost of the dental service has already assumed the proportions of a public scandal. There is no doubt that the trial-scales of payment were excessive and the Minister has taken steps to correct that. But what does emerge is the shocking neglect of the nation's teeth in the past. Allowing for the shortage of dentists (and it would need three times as many to take up the present slack), the scheme could not pretend to cope with these arrears; the only possible plan was to restrict dental plates to essential cases and lay emphasis on conservation of teeth. The worst aspect of the change so far has been that the teeth of children and expectant mothers (the care of which is the best investment for the future) may be neglected through the desertion of clinic dentists to lucrative surgeries. The experience of the first months does indeed raise the question whether itemised scales and private surgeries can be long justified either in terms of finance or dental efficiency. When a dentist nets £6,000 a year, as some are doing, it can only be through scamped work, or over work—which amounts to the same thing. Public interest and well-being may compel, what Mr. Bevan has not suggested, a salaried dental service and public dental clinics.

Another surcharge on the scheme has been the rush for spectacles and opthalmic examinations. It was estimated that 4,000,000 pairs of spectacles would be needed in the first year; the rate is now running at 7,000,000 a year; the sources of supply are overburdened and delays are lengthening; the corresponding costs for examination have risen. The factors are fairly obvious and might have been foreseen with more accuracy.

Among old people surveys have shown that out of 6,000,000 at least 5,250,000 wear spectacles for reading; of those, a million have never had their sight tested (their glasses came from the self-test counters of the multiple stores) and 2,000,000 have not had their sight-tested for over five years. They have taken the chance of getting suitable spectacles. And, perhaps, one of the merits of the spectacle scheme has reacted to its disadvantage. There has been an insistence on variety in the frames; there are twenty different styles, of which eleven are free and the other nine can be had for an extra charge ranging from 1/- to 8/-. People who might have been discouraged by strictly utilitarian models (and the "standardised owl" that the critics predicted) have found the cosmetic as well as the opthalmic effects attractive. But the rush will find its own level and the State investment in improved eyesight will be more evenly spread over the years.

Another big item is surgical appliances, issued through the hospital services, artificial limbs, hearing-aids, surgical boots and so on. These are costly, and the demand has been more than predicted but not, obviously, more than the need. These appliances are issued only where the medical profession is absolutely satisfied that the patient's health and physical efficiency requires them. What it means is that thousands, who have been suffering in silence from impaired health and disability, are now being rehabilitated. As a jester remarked this may be putting the Service "in the red," but it is putting the nation "in the pink."

By far and away the heaviest load is the hospital services, even without the large rebuilding programme which has been suspended under the ban on capital work. The hospitals boards are energetically providing essential equipment which most of the voluntary hospitals could not afford. The Whitley Council has awarded the student nurses over £2,000,000 more a year and £1,500,000 more for hospital domestics. No one can grudge that or, if they do, they will have to find alternative inducements to attract and keep people in a profession so long under-privileged. The Spens Report on hospital consultants and medical staffs did not appear until after the initiation of the scheme. The results are just beginning to show. They entail a heavier salary budget than was estimated.

The scheme is in its infancy; the sickness services of this country have revealed deficiencies too long concealed; the costs are heavy, but the ultimate dividend is incalculably high.

THE POETRY OF MONEY

To anyone who counts his weekly earnings on the fingers of one hand, or even of two hands, the sum of ten thousand pounds will not mean very much. It will be, statistically, a fact which is like the distances of the stars; morally, one beyond good and evil. For me it came suddenly to life at about half-past eleven on the morning of Friday, December 10th, when Mr. Robert Benjamin Pearlman was giving evidence before the Tribunal. Mr. Pearlman, a greyish-pinkish man, perhaps in his early fifties, and of an amiable manner, was asked about the commission he would have received on a deal involving the "placing" of a large block of shares.

"It would have been a nice commission," he said. "Ten thousand pounds—probably a bit more—and profit on the shares."

His voice sank and lingered over these words. And a silent and solemn moment settled on the entire court. It was as if Mr. Pearlman's sad voice had set ten thousand bank notes hovering in the yellow Westminster air. And all present—the public, the witnesses, their wives, the barristers, and perhaps even the members of the Tribunal itself—seemed for that moment to be watching the notes drift and vanish, and to be feeling a personal pang at their loss.

And when another witness said, of a sum of £4,000 which he had paid out in unspecified expenses: "It was too small a sum to query in a big deal," we all, I think, momentarily felt that way; we wouldn't have queried it. But, even as we shared his indifference to the fate of four thousand pounds, so also were we appalled with a sense of tragedy when, asked whether certain business interests had suffered on account of the publicity of the Tribunal, he replied—in a voice as poetically desolate as Mr. Pearlman's "Yes—to the tune of £615,000." After that, there was no difficulty in understanding Mr. Stanley's dismissal of £715 as "petty cash."

Our pleasure in the vicarious handling of these moneys arose, I am sure, in every case from the caressive tones in which they were spoken of by those who actually had handled them. It was an initiation into a world in which money is like poetry—a prize and ornament of life, not merely a maddening need. For it wasn't only the—comparatively—"poor men" of that world, but also its millionaires and multi-millionaires, in whose voices one heard the same note.

"Your interest was excited immediately, Mr. Wolfson?"

"O, vairry much so"—and one could feel how "vairry much" it was so. "There was vairry large money involved." And here it was a question, for this multi-millionaire controlling 137 companies, of the prospect of acquiring a further huge group.

Money, almost like poetry, for its own sake: and also the poet's readiness to take a chance, to make a wild leap into the dark. A currency, yes, but a buoyant currency of the imagination, not tied by sluggish facts, but flinging a bridge out over them. This was the heady new world of flotations, speculations, and property deals—your own block of flats might change hands overnight—to which the Tribunal introduced us; one very different from the world of old-fashioned business, with its trade-marks and well-established rules. When the lawyers were asking their questions, it seemed often to be not only a struggle of fact against fantasy, but of one type of fact against another; of one view of life against another. It was the lawyers who expected exact balance sheets; the money-masters who cast their money on the waters, and it might (or might not) return to them after many days. At times, during these cross-examinations, the incompatibility of outlook and consequent misunderstandings were such, that it was either exasperating or funny.

Mr. Pearlman, for example, after mystifying the lawyers with his explanations about the buying and selling of shares, was asked: "Well buttah—what do you have an office for, Mr. Pearlman?" "So as not to go about in the street," he replied. He had had, he said, only one conversation—and nothing agreed in writing—about the transaction, on which he was hoping to make ten thousand pounds. And there would have been "out-of-pocket expenses."

"Wellbuttah—what out-of-pocket expenses, Mr. Pearlman, could you possibly have incurred in that one conversation?"

"O," said Mr. Pearlman, with a large gesture. "I wouldn't put it hard and fast."

"Now," said Mr. Justice Lynskey, "I'm going to have the truth out of you. And no nonsense."

There followed ten minutes of befuddling talk. Mr. Justice Lynskey leant his head on his fist. "O, all right!" he said. And the task of interpreting Mr. Pearlman was taken over by Mr. Lloyd-Jones, the Welsh barrister, whose jokes and brilliance entertained the court throughout. Briefed by his client, Mr. Stanley, on the true nature of Mr. Pearlman's business, Mr. Lloyd-Jones was able to put questions to him in a manner which made him feel, for the first time, that he was understood. Mr. Pearlman's voice became brisker, his bearing firmer. So it was, whenever a man of business (of this new type) felt that a lawyer had grasped his fluid meanings.

On the whole, none was as well able to give them this feeling as Mr. Justice Lynskey, who astounded the court with his impromptu analysis of a cheque-cashing system, by which Mr. Stanley managed to keep himself "always about £1,000 up." Thereafter, Mr. Stanley treated the Chairman with a special deference: "one of us," he seemed to feel; and there were rapid exchanges between them, which had a Clapham-and-Dwyer comic quality. For example, on the "transferring" of import quotas ". . . which is done every day of the week."

"Do you know it's illegal?" "I don't think it is illegal." "I'm telling you it is." "Then I haven't had anything to do with it."

Laughter was still subsiding, when Mr. Stanley set it off again by repeating the same point—"which I haven't had anything to do with, because my Lord says it's illegal"—in a bracket to a different answer.

Now, this fluid business ethic will be put under a legal microscope, and diagnosed. The Tribunal's report, although concerned directly with allegations against persons, will also, inevitably, be a work of definition.

"Please do not think I have formed any view, Mr. Gibson," said Mr. Justice Lynskey at one point. "I want to hear your reactions. The question of what constitutes an honest business is one which the Tribunal will have to consider."

The report, in fact, will be charting the legal frontiers of this vaguely extended new territory, in which licences, priorities, and "services" have a high cash value, and business men, who formerly sought favours of each other, now seek them of the Board of Trade. This, rather than decisions about individuals, will be its real interest to the public; and its more special interest to the staff officials of the Board of Trade, who during the last three years have had responsibilities of a new type thrust upon them—responsibilities so extended and confusing that an official may well find that his integrity and experience are not always a sufficient guide.

On the one hand, they have had to enforce controls and restrictions; on the other hand, to do everything possible to assist the recovery of British trade. That means helping and hindering, encouraging and discouraging, almost in the same act. Listening to the evidence given by Board of Trade officials, one could note how, with different individuals, the emphasis fell to one side or the other. There were those who had turned themselves into enthusiastic go-getters for business. "If I can't find a thing in this country, I'll go anywhere in the world to find it." "I rang these firms." "Allied General need bags, I said, and you're to get cracking." And there were others, perhaps the more old-fashioned, who would tend to "minute against." These seemed more in countenance in the moral climate of the Tribunal; where *not* to have had dinner with somebody, *not* to have given or received a present, above all, to have *refused* a licence, appeared as marks of outstanding integrity.

"And did you grant that licence?"

"No, Sir!" The answer would come with eager pride; the Three would begin to write fast on their black dais; and we would all feel, in our own breasts, the delicious glow of incorruptibility. Straightening out this "tangle," in terms of new conditions, the Tribunal may find itself producing a new code for government, for business, and for the public. GILES ROMILLY

A LONDON DIARY

THERE were plenty of turkeys for Christmas. That the public did not know this was the fault of newspapers whose hatred of the Government overcame their love of their own commercial, sentimental Christmas. Believing that nothing would allow Fleet Street to sabotage its jolly wallow with Scrooge and men of good will, I was disturbed at the convincing reports of the shortage of turkeys, geese, and other poultry, widely published just before Christmas. "Far less than last year," was the cry. "Only one bird for every twelve families at Strachey's misery Christmas." Doing some last-minute shopping on Christmas Eve I was surprised to see poultry of all description hanging, and still for sale, in every butcher's shop and poulterer's shop I passed. Every friend of mine I have seen since Christmas who wanted a bird tells me he got one. There seems to have been a glut, not a shortage. Alarmed by the newspaper stories of scarcity, many people ordered birds from three or four sources in the hope that they might get one. As soon as their bird became certain at one shop they cancelled the order at the others. The result was a heavy loss for many small shopkeepers unable to sell their poultry at the last minute—a loss most unkindly caused by their patron saint, the Tory press. This scare was the worst type of fabricated sensationalism the press has indulged in for a long time. One telephone call to the Ministry of Food could have prevented a general anxiety, even though it had been at the cost of a Christmas truce on attacks against the Government. Last year there was available for Christmas a total of 16,500 tons of poultry of all kinds. This year, by December 17th, 20,000 tons had already been distributed. Then the quantity of turkeys was exactly the same, but after December 17th this year a large number of extra turkeys arrived from Ireland. It was a good year for turkeys.

* * *

I have just learnt that E. M. Forster is on the edge of his 70th birthday. I hope that in preparing the list of New Year's Honours Mr. Attlee has remembered this remarkable, but retiring and, indeed, elusive, figure. Mr. Forster's influence, like that of his close friend, Lowes Dickinson, is of a very personal and individual character. There was a moment after he published *A Passage to India,* twenty-four years ago, when it seemed likely that he would rank as a novelist with the few really great masters of the craft; we started to re-read his enchanting, but imperfect, earlier works and to write articles on the evolution of his style and the nature of his "message." And then Mr. Forster stopped writing novels. He remained delightful, lovable and significant; his essays, his short stories and articles (some of the best appeared in this journal and in the old *Nation*) were eagerly awaited. "His reputation," as a wag put it, "went up with every book he did not write." The fact is that it went up among a comparatively small number of the discerning who realised from his wireless talks and occasional writings that E. M. Forster was not a disgruntled liberal compromising with the totalitarian trend of his age, but a deeply convinced stickler for personal liberty which he thought compatible with Socialism. He is an unrepentant believer in the gospel, stated in more than one of his works, that the real value of life lies not in Art or in Social Change (important though both are), but in good relations among human beings here and now.

* * *

Ever since I heard of the arrest of the *Daily Mail* correspondent in Rangoon some months ago, I have been expecting to see newspaper headlines about a new "Campbell case." All that the press knew was that Mr. Alexander Campbell (a war-time Commando who had fought on both sides in the Spanish Civil War) had been gaoled in connection with some gun-running story and that Colonel Tulloch, with whom he was said to be in correspondence, had found it wise not to remain in Calcutta. Mr. Campbell has been released and the documents in the case circulated in England. The only paper which has carried the story and made public the Burmese Government's documents is the *Daily Worker,* and the only comment I have seen on their enterprise was a long reply by the editor of the *Daily Mail,* published in the *Daily Worker.* In the *Daily Mail* itself, I have seen no reference to the Burmese Government's allegations nor to the argument between the *Daily Worker* and the *Daily Mail.* I can find no justification for the *Daily Worker's* suggestion that the British Foreign Office was in some way involved in gun-running to help the Karens against the Burmese Government. On the contrary, I note from the correspondence that it was the British Ambassador in Rangoon who "tipped off" the Burmese Government and that the letters seem not to imply any official organisation but highly amateur activities on the part of some private individuals. I have not heard that Colonel Tulloch or Mr. Campbell have made any effort to rebut the allegations of the Burmese Government. The fact that letters passed between them is substantiated by an affidavit by a B.O.A.C. employee, who opened one letter, and took a copy in transit, from Campbell to Tulloch. I know that the Burmese Government decided not to prosecute because they were anxious not to damage relations with friendly people in England. They published the documents to show they had a *prima facie* case if they had wished to go ahead with the trial. The *Daily Worker* will, of course, put down the failure of other newspapers to take the matter up, to their desire to hide a threatened scandal. The truth is, however, that, in its present form, the subject is so full of legal traps for the journalist that cautious commentators will prefer to wait until M.P.s have asked questions about the matter in the privileged conditions of the House of Commons.

* * *

I cannot pretend to be surprised at the arrest of Cardinal Mindszenthy. When I saw him last summer I felt that for the first time I knew what a militant medieval ecclesiastic was really like. He is the sort of man who courts arrest in a period of social upheaval, who feels, it may be, ashamed if he is not persecuted by the apostles of anti-Christ. In his case the often vague charge of interference in politics, and being a leader of reaction and so forth has a precise meaning. In conversation he was arrogant, but I would not like to draw the line between personal arrogance and confidence in the power of the Church he serves. As a thinker and propagandist his attitude is well illustrated by the story I was told in Budapest of how in a sermon before a great congregation he described seeing the tears flowing down the face of a plaster statue of the Virgin when it was returned from exile to its native land. He was choleric and violent and more contemptuous of the moderate, compromising wing of the Church than of the Government which had roused his ecclesiastical ire by deciding to secularise the schools. The Government seem to have been ready for a concordat of sorts if the Cardinal would agree to priests teaching within secular schools, but no such compromise was possible for Mindszenthy. That the Government regards him as dangerous I should gather from the fact that it charges him with currency offences, which have, from its point of view, the advantage of raising issues which the Papacy cannot include in its denunciation of religious persecution.

* * *

By eleven o'clock on Sunday morning (December 26th) the sunshine was dazzling on the thick, brittle white frost. You could kick it in front of you in chunks as you walked on the grass, and the weeping willow was as stiff and brilliant as a lighted chandelier with glass pendants reaching to the ground. I picked, coated hard with frost, a bunch of primroses with one red polyanthus, two fine ox-lips, two small red daisies, a sprig of honeysuckle, scarlet japonica, and the last surviving heads of marigold and wall-flower. There were also, of course, Christmas roses and yellow jasmine. We started by car to London and talked of eating sandwiches in the sunshine. That was for the first five miles or so. Suddenly we moved from a glittering fairy world into a cold, wet blanket of fog. It fell like a curtain across the road just thirty miles from London; plunging into it was as precise and definite an experience as diving into cold water. And every mile, until we were in the suburbs, where, I presume, warmth is generated by the excessive proximity of human beings to each other, we stopped and were passed, and then repassed other cars similarly stopping, to rub away a hard opaque skin of dirty ice that formed unceasingly on the windscreen of the car. CRITIC

STATE SECRET

NEW YEAR is here, New Year is here!
The taxes now are due!
The public, after Christmas cheer,
Their gruesome tasks pursue!
But in the seasonable fog
The citizens are all agog
To see the Honours catalogue,
The Honours List *Who's Who.*

But all in vain the public seek
To pierce the New Year mist,
The Honours List provides no leak
For prying columnist.
The blushing Honours candidate
Remains a secret of the State—
On tenterhooks the public wait
The New Year Honours List.

What Councillors of civic worth
Will find their labours crowned?
What back-room boys of lowly birth
Be Barons at a bound?
What titles will the Crown dispense
To artists famed for diligence,
Who owe aesthetic eminence
To flatness all around?

What unknown housewife will they raise,
Beside her frugal hearth?
What signs of recognition blaze
On Stafford's stony path?
Are New Year Peerages a threat
To decimate the Cabinet?
Will carbonaceous Gaitskell get
The Order of the Bath?

What well-screened scientists will stand
Among the new noblesse?
What ducal dignities expand
The Viscount-studded Press?
Will Dames adorn the cinema?
Will Shawcross elevate the Bar?
And is there room for one more star
On Monty's battle-dress?

SAGITTARIUS

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H.M. the Queen herself . . . knows that a mother who allows her daughter to stay out with friends in the "400" or the "Orchid Room" until four o'clock can rest as much assured as the mother who leaves her baby in the municipal day nursery when she goes out to work.—*Sunday Despatch.* (H. E. Wells.)

When he left the platform Mr. Strachey was surrounded by women autograph hunters who asked him to sign their ration books.—*Daily Mirror.* (R. J. Robion.)

Conservation of fuel resources for military needs cannot be ensured except by international co-operation.—*Daily Telegraph.* (D. H. Robbins).

The General Council of the United Nations Association, Urges that military exercises should not take place on the Sabbath.—From Agenda of U.N.A. General Council, Dec. 11th. (P. G. J. Pulzer).

Not long before his death Dr. Lunt, at the request of a leading Southern editor, wrote a prayer for editors.—*Yorkshire Post.* (F. Youel).

Mr. Justice Oliver held at Manchester Assizes to-day that a ball hit for six which soared out of a suburban cricket ground and struck a woman on the head could not be regarded as a nuisance.—*Yorkshire Evening Post.* (Eric Sheward.)

THE MILK PROBLEM

The Milk (Special Designations) Bill which received a second reading in the House of Lords on December 14 is a first step towards the provision of a pure milk supply for this country. The cow is the most bountiful of animals. She can produce butter-fat from grass, and other foods that contain no fat whatever, and go on doing this year after year, and fat is what we all need more than any other food to-day.

But milk may be a curse as well as a blessing, for it may become infected by disease both before and after it leaves the cow. Epidemics of typhoid, diphtheria, dysentry, scarlet fever and septic sore throat have been traced to milk, and have arisen either because the water used for diluting the milk or washing the utensils had been infected, or because those handling the milk had been suffering from one of these diseases or were carriers of infection. One way to avoid this is by scrupulous cleanliness in regard to the collection and distribution of the milk and in the persons of those that handle it. But even so, safety cannot be assured, for people can be carriers of disease without knowing it, and boiling or pasteurisation is the only way to make certain that milk is not a conveyer of added infection.

Milk may also be infected by abortus disease in the cow, and this can give rise to relapsing fever in humans. But the main danger is, of course, tuberculosis. Some 30 to 35 per cent. of dairy cattle are infected with this disease, but only about ½ per cent. of our cows are giving tuberculous milk at any one time. But the milk from several cows is bulked in churns for conveyance to the dairy and the milk of many churns is often collected in 3,000 gallon tanks to be carried to the towns. It follows, therefore, that 7 to 10 per cent. of ordinary churn milk is infected with tuberculosis and 80 to 100 per cent. of that carried in the huge containers.

To what extent is tuberculous milk a danger to man? There are two sorts of tuberculosis—the bovine and the human. About 1 per cent. of pulmonary tuberculosis is due to the bovine type of bacillus and about 23.3 per cent. of tuberculous disease in other parts of the body, such as the bones and joints, abdomen and the coverings of the brain, have a similar origin. Applying these percentages to the notifications of this disease in 1946, we get a total of 2,520 cases of the bovine variety. But these figures almost certainly under-estimate the frequency of the disease. Innumerable tonsils are removed every year in this country. An appreciable percentage of these show indication of tuberculous disease on microscopic examination, and yet notification is extremely rare.

The mortality figures, however, give a more accurate picture. In 1946 there were 19,365 deaths from pulmonary tuberculosis and 3,482 from non-pulmonary. Applying the same percentages here we get approximately 1,004 deaths and these were to a considerable extent in children.

Unfortunately, milk is not always the simple, harmless product that we should all like it to be. The law recognises raw untreated milk and three *designated* varieties. There is *accredited* milk in which cows and cowsheds are inspected and the milk produced under conditions of relative cleanliness as shown by its bacterial count. Then there is the *attested* or T.T. (tuberculin tested) milk, in which, in addition to the above, the cows are found not to react to the tuberculin test, thus showing that they are not infected. Lastly, there is *heat-treated* milk which in practice means pasteurised, that is, milk maintained at a temperature of 140 deg. F. for 30 minutes or, as is more usual nowadays, kept at 162 deg. for 15 seconds.

"Accredited" is an unfortunate name, for in many cases such milk has very little to its credit. In 1946 a higher percentage of the churns that reached London filled with accredited milk were infected by living tubercle bacilli than of those that contained ordinary milk. It is easy to see why this may be the case. A farmer has a certificate for the production of accredited milk. He has his cows tested and removes those that do not react, to develop a tuberculosis-free herd because he receives a better price for T.T. milk. The reactors are, however, left, so that in time the herd producing the accredited milk consists largely or even entirely of infected cattle; for although it is easy to obtain a conviction where milk contains added water, this is much more difficult if the undesirable addition is virulent tubercle bacilli. Fortunately, the Milk (Special Designations) Bill recognises this anomaly and in five years the designation "Accredited" ("Standard" in Scotland) is to be abolished altogether if the Bill becomes law.

But how is our milk supply to be freed from tuberculous infection? By regular testing of cattle and the immediate removal of all reactors, a tuberculosis-free herd can be built up. Already 15 per cent. of our milk comes from such herds and the number is slowly increasing, although we are far behind some other countries in this. What our farmers seem to be slow to realise is that the elimination of tuberculosis really pays, not only because a better price can be obtained for the milk but also because healthy cattle live longer and produce more milk. A milch cow in this country has on the average less than four lactations and yields only about 500 gallons per lactation, compared with 750 to 800 in Denmark, Finland and Holland. But though T.T. milk is usually richer in fat content and better in every way, it is not absolutely safe and living tubercle bacilli do occasionally turn up in it. To be quite sure, therefore, all milk, including T.T. should be pasteurised as has been compulsory in Sweden since 1939. In this way, not only will the germs of tuberculosis be killed but also those of the other infective diseases that are liable to contaminate milk.

About two-thirds of the milk sold in this country is already pasteurised, to a large extent because it pays the dairyman to do so. Pasteurised milk keeps better and accordingly there is less waste and distribution is facilitated. The extra cost is not high—about 2d. a gallon.

The Milk (Special Designation) Bill gives power to the Minister of Food to specify areas in which nothing but pasteurised or T.T. milk shall be sold retail. It is difficult to see why T.T. milk should be excluded from the general order but it may be thought that universal pasteurisation might discourage the production of T.T. milk; moreover, there still may be people who object to pasteurisation, however unreasonable this may seem. At least 98 per cent. of the milk sold in London is pasteurised and in other towns the percentage is high, so that in urban areas it will be relatively easy to put this Bill into operation. But in the country things are very different. There are many small producer-retailers who have not attested herds and there is not yet sufficient pasteurisation plant to go round. As this becomes available, arrangements will have to be made for collection and pasteurisation so that country areas may be included. How necessary this is can be seen by comparing the death rate from bovine tuberculosis in town and country. Abdominal tuberculosis is very often due to the bovine type of organism, especially in young children. In 1944, the death rate from this disease in children under five was ten times as great in the combined rural districts of England and Wales as in London.

Many objections have been raised to pasteurisation, but none of these have any substance. It is true that by it soluble lime and phosphorus are reduced by 5 per cent., and that a small percentage of vitamins B1 and C are destroyed. To people on an ordinary mixed diet this has no significance whatever. Only in babies who take nothing but milk is it of any importance, but the deficiency is readily put right by the addition of a few drops of orange juice and cod liver oil to the milk. Experimentally, calves did better on pasteurised milk but it must be remembered that calves frequently acquire tuberculosis by way of their mothers' milk, indeed, pasteurisation was first introduced to prevent this. Limited experiments seem to indicate that children do better as regards height on pasteurised milk but put on weight faster on raw. It has been suggested that immunity to tuberculosis and other diseases might be secured by the irregular and uncertain doses of the germs that cause them, such as are contained in ordinary milk. It would be just as logical to drink polluted water with a similar object.

Within a few years of the new Milk Bill coming into force we ought to see some reduction in the 1,000 deaths a year from bovine tuberculosis and of the many hundreds of children who are permanently maimed by this disease. Meanwhile, the public will be well advised to boil all milk, given to children, unless it is T.T. or pasteurised.

SOMERVILLE HASTINGS

LYSENKO AND THE SCIENTISTS—II

The scientific writings of Lysenko and his school are voluminous, varied and almost entirely in Russian, though some of the papers have English or German summaries. The *corpus* has been excellently reviewed by Hudson and Richens (*The New Genetics in the Soviet Union*; Imperial Bureau of Plant Breeding and Genetics, Cambridge, 1946). I shall have to dismiss much of it very shortly in order to concentrate on the parts most important for the present controversy.

Lysenko's first work was concerned with the already-known process of vernalisation in which treatments (of temperature, moisture, etc.) applied to seed before sowing alter the time taken by the plant to reach maturity, set flowers or ripen its fruit. He discussed it in terms of an interesting and suggestive theory of "the phasic development of plants," which was "dialectical" in the sense that it concerned itself with the historical processes of plant development; it also stated that the physiology of this could be conceived in terms of the interaction of opposing tendencies, but it was not made very clear what these tendencies are. Its detailed working out was, in fact, not very obviously Hegelian, but it analysed development into a series of phases, each of which is modified in a characteristic way by those influences (both internal and external) to which it is susceptible, and thus passes into the next.

Although the theory is expressed in a highly personal terminology, with which the translators admit that they make heavy going, it seems that Lysenko not only directed attention to a field of fundamental importance which had been little considered when he first wrote about it, but that his ideas were novel, and contained, amongst much vague and almost metaphysical verbiage, at least a realisation of the nature of the problems which would have to be tackled. His phasic theory and the even more explicitly dialectical theory of another Russian, Krenke, on the cyclical alternation of senescence and rejuvenescence in plants, are certainly far from negligible contributions to the theory of organic development. Lysenko also organised the application of vernalisation on a large scale in practical farming. There is no obvious reason why it should not have favourable results, but the evidence, available in this country, that it has actually done so is not very convincing and there is some reason to believe that it has been found disappointing.

The second basis of Lysenko's outlook can be found in theoretical considerations as to the nature of heredity. These originate from a recognition of some of the weaknesses in the theories current in the early nineteen hundreds, together with an acceptance of the still earlier suggestions of Darwin. Darwin was more or less explicitly puzzled to find an explanation of heredity; and in none of the suggestions he made about it did he envisage the existence of a specific part of the organism devoted to hereditary transmission. By the end of the last century, however, the investigation of the numerical proportions in which characters are transmitted, and the observation of the behaviour of particular stainable cell-constituents (chromosomes), led most biologists to believe that inheritance is mediated by certain particles, the genes, located on the chromosomes. Until Muller succeeded in inducing changes in it by X-rays (in 1916), this hereditary substance could not be altered by any available technique; hereditary changes, which occurred only rarely, were completely outside experimental control.

The geneticists of the early years of this century had, first, to defend the importance of the new concept of the material basis of heredity against the conservatism of an older generation. In doing so, they tended to draw too emphatic a distinction between the hereditary genes and the rest of the organism, giving the impression that the former did not heed to be considered from the physiological point of view which was becoming more and more applied to other aspects of biological function. They thus earned the suspicion of many of the younger biologists and genetics developed in some isolation from much of the rest of biology; in this country, for instance, it grew up mainly outside the Universities. Gradually, however, through the work of Geldschmidt, Muller, Darlington, Haldane and many others, it has assimilated the substance of the criticisms made against its earliest manifestations, and to-day many aspects of it are thoroughly permeated with physiological and dynamic thinking.

Lysenko, however, still attacks it on the old lines, using arguments dating from the pre-genetical days of Darwin as well as those produced by those who first criticised it as unphysiological (such as, amongst Russians, Timiriazev and Michurin). The essential basis of nearly all his criticism is that there cannot be a difference in principle between the hereditary substance and the rest of the body (a hypothesis he stigmatises as "idealism"); and, from this, begging the question of what is meant by "in principle," he deduces that agents which alter the rest of the body must be genetically able to alter the hereditary substance. He admits they do not always do so, which seems to raise some logical difficulties; but he also produces considerable evidence that they sometimes do. Hudson and Richens list thirteen lines of evidence which he offers.

On these his importance as a geneticist stands or falls. Some of them can be fairly quickly dismissed. Several of the phenomena he indicates (*e.g.*, "unlike" reciprocal hybrids, genetical mosaics, failure of segregation), are fully accounted for in modern genetical theory. Others are based on the uncritical acceptance of named varieties as equivalent to pure lines. In others again, Lysenko has only been able to continue maintaining his original interpretation by incorporating *ad hoc* hypotheses which make it formally able to account for any result at all. The remaining evidence is that which claims to show that heredity can be altered by external influences either by submitting the organism to altered conditions, or by grafting one type of plant on to another, when the stock and graft are said to influence each other's hereditary qualities. This claim to be able to control heredity is Lysenko's main scientific novelty, and the basis of his assertion that his own methods are more "practically useful" than those of his opponents.

Neither of the two parts of Lysenko's claim is easy to accept, but the so-called "graft hybridisation" is perhaps the less difficult. Lysenko's own experiments do not carry entire conviction, owing to various internal inconsistencies, lack of controls, etc. Graft hybridisation is a problem with a long history. Nearly all alleged cases in the past have turned out to be misinterpretations; but there is no doubt that, for instance, viruses can be transmitted in this way, and some indications that the proteins of two healthy members may occasionally act in a virus-like way in each other's bodies. It is possible, though not yet acceptable as proven, that Lysenko is "on to something" in this obscure and not fully understood field. But even if he is, there seems no reason whatever to believe that his results could overthrow classical genetics, though they might conceivably represent an addition, even quite an important addition, to it.

His claim to control hereditary alterations by the conditions of life is much more difficult to swallow. The opposing "orthodox" genetical view is, not that the genes are unchangeable, but that many experiments have failed to change them by the usual range of conditions which organisms normally meet; that they can be altered by a few kinds of rather powerful disruptive agents, such as X-rays and a limited group of chemicals; and that, although they must be undergoing physiological processes through which they should theoretically be controllable, up to the present these are still almost entirely unknown. These conclusions are based on the work of very many scientists—work which has been very critically examined. Lysenko's evidence against them is again technically not water-tight; the alleged hereditary changes are followed through too few generations, the genetical purity of his initial material is not adequately ensured, the possibility of selection is not always ruled out. One hesitates to describe any phenomenon as "impossible," but Lysenko's claims seem so unlikely in view of all our present knowledge that they cannot possibly be accepted until repeated, in other laboratories, and under much more carefully controlled conditions. Moreover, there are very few of Lysenko's results, which, if true, would directly disprove modern genetical theory. The main one is his statement that the numerical ratios in which hereditary types are recovered after a cross is only an indication of the varied conditions under which the offspring have grown up; and the evidence can so rarely be twisted to support this that he has been forced to invoke the influence of unknown conditions acting a stage in the life-history when they are experimentally unverifiable.

In this summary account, whole categories of objections to Lysenko have been omitted; for instance, his puerile contention that it is illegitimate to apply mathematics to living things, and his belief (though this is shared with most Communists) that an argument can be refuted by vilifying the motives of its exponent. Set all this aside; the crux remains that much of the evidence Lysenko produces can already be understood in normal genetical terms; some is unconvincing as it stands, but if confirmed would demand additions to present theory; none of it demands the abandonment of the degree of understanding we have yet reached. It follows that, though the administrative changes in scientific institutes in the U.S.S.R. can be defended in terms of the Soviet conception of society, they appear extremely unwise, and inflict a grave injury on the body of science, when put in motion on behalf of a worker whose theories are as ill-founded and as blind to the significance of recent work as we have seen Lysenko's to be. C. H. WADDINGTON

CONVERSATIONS IN SPAIN

The Spanish secret police boarded the Madrid train after Irun, moving through the carriages, examining documents and scrutinising travellers. It was just after midnight and I was standing in the corridor talking with some Spaniards. A man came shouldering quietly down the corridor, flicking the lapel of his coat up and down to show his badge. He seemed true to the fictional type—his felt hat pulled down over his brow, his suit dark and greasy like his knotted tie. He went into the compartments, waking the people crowded inside, and stepping over the hunched figures who were squatting between the seats and along the corridor. He seemed to be an accepted part of the scenery, and I was told he was looking for "thieves and spies." He took a long time to glance through someone's papers in order to listen to our conversation, then moved off down the corridor.

The travellers did not seem obviously afraid of *La Secreta*. But, whenever I turned the conversation to politics, there would be a quick glance at the faces of the people nearby. The only time I was told bluntly that politics were not discussed in Spain to-day was by a businessman who, having travelled abroad, realised that different standards applied in Spain and outside. He argued, as did many other people, that Franco had at least kept Spain out of the world war.

On the train to Granada, a commercial traveller noticed my army rank on an old label on my baggage. He welcomed me as a comrade, saying that he had been an officer in the Republican Army. After three years in a concentration camp he had been dispatched to forced labour in North Africa. When some of the occupants of the carriage had gone out for a smoke, he began to talk of his friends who were still at large, in the hills. They had been on the run since the Franco victory. A number of them had taken the promise of an amnesty at its face value and had given themselves up. They, like many political exiles who had returned with the same hope, were shot. I heard other references to the men in the hills. Sometimes they were called political refugees, sometimes brigands; and a few people went out of their way to say that though these men might be outlaws, they were criminals anyway. A gang of them ambushed a high Government official who was out hunting in the Pyrenees. They took his food, gun and horse, sending him back on foot. Fortunately for him, his identity papers had been left behind and the men did not know he was a prominent official in the Secret Police.

On one occasion, I found myself surrounded by supporters of the regime. One of them, a businessman, indignantly waved a loaf of bread under my nose. " Look at it," he said, " foreign radios tell me it's black. Is it? Look at that bread those peasants are selling. Is that black?" Where, he went on, was the fighting that foreigners insisted went on in Spain? He knew nothing of it. We were in Bobadilla, and there was a troop train in a siding. The soldiers were packed into cattle trucks. They were unshaven, dressed in dirty threadbare uniforms, wearing rope-soled sandals. An officer was strutting around driving stragglers back towards the trucks. But these wretched conscripts, apparently, were on their way, not to fight guerillas, but to North Africa. What my businessman did not tell me was that in Southern Spain the rations fluctuate weekly, that the villagers in country districts eat black bread and are too poor to live from the black market which enables the wealthy to live in luxury. Perhaps he had never seen the desperate smuggling which goes on from Gibraltar across the line at La Linea. The stretch of road between the control posts is full of people whose clothes bulge with smuggled goods. Though there are some prosecutions, neither the British nor Spanish authorities seem concerned to check the flow.

In Southern Spain, where anti-Franco feeling appears to be strong, the people talk only with reluctance. In Gibraltar, of course, it is still possible to speak freely. Here there is evidence which offsets any claims Franco makes to be an acceptable friend of the Western democracies. In the bay lie the hulks of ships sunk by midget submarines based on the Spanish coast during the [illegible] in which Spain was "neutral." I talked to the Master of a British ship who told me that he had seen two vessels close to him sunk by these submarines. Other people in Gibraltar remember the Nazi agents stationed round the perimeter to watch the fortress, and the special walls still stand which were built to conceal activity on the Rock from the glinting binoculars less than a mile away.

Franco, for his convenience, has played down the more decorative aspects of Fascism. The Falange, even among his supporters, is not popular. Yet crowds are still assembled on instructions. I met one man whose expenses had been paid for a fairly long journey in order to stand in the streets of a town the General was visiting. Yet the uniforms, ragged though they are, are still there. The police carry German rifles and some of the troops wear German helmets. When I pointed this out to a casual acquaintance, he was very amused. He pointed to his wrist watch. " American," he said, " my tie—English. Military helmets—German. Spain has become quite internationally minded."

It would not be difficult to paint a picture of Spain to-day using either soot or whitewash. But neither would be accurate. Franco is building new houses and blocks of flats, but the rent alone would take the entire wage of a worker. Madrid is gay and superficially prosperous, but the smart people in the streets rub shoulders with the beggars and the blind vendors of lottery tickets. Sitting in cafés anywhere in Spain, eating good but fabulously expensive food, one has only to look up to see a haggard face at the window peering in wistfully.

The corrupt and bureaucratic administration cannot revive the country to a decent level of prosperity, let alone make any headway in developing Spain's natural resources. Bribery and privilege are coupled with political repression and with a Catholic church which, an English Catholic told me in Madrid, was the worst travesty of Catholicism in the world. "Catholicism," someone else said to me, " must be a great religion if it can contain such decay and still retain its hold upon the people." In the cathedrals one can always see small figures, *homuncul* in black, kneeling before the great altars and shrines, dwarfed beneath a mountain of gold and silver ornaments. That contrast typifies contemporary Spain.

STEPHEN ABERDARE

The Arts and Entertainment

RADIO NOTES

OVER and above the usual seasonal fare, which is no more to be criticised than plum pudding and mince pies, Christmas week provided the most exciting listening for many weeks. First there was Mr. E. A. Harding's production of *The Tempest,* in some ways the most satisfying radio presentation of Shakespeare that I have heard. It was satisfying because of its very boldness: Mr. Harding dispensed with both narrator and stage-directions; we were, I think justifiably, expected to know the play; and the consequence was that from the very beginning—and I do not think the opening scene of shipwreck could have been more convincingly rendered in any medium—the play went with a sureness of rhythm and tempo which was wholly delightful. Then there was the presence of Mr. Gielgud, who was born to play Prospero as he was born to play so many heroes of Shakespeare: the majesty and magic of his voice chimed perfectly with the majesty and magic of his lines. And for the most part he was well supported by the rest of the cast; though I heard, in a much less skilful production of the play some years ago, the drunken scenes of Caliban, Trinculo and Stephano played with greater relish. But on the whole Mr. Harding's production was so good that the surgical ruthlessness with which the text was cut could almost be forgiven.

Rumpelstiltskin was a most deft and entertaining dramatisation of Grimm's story which gave the author and producer, Mr. Francis Dillon, considerable scope for his talent for satirical fantasy and burlesque. It was that rare programme, a witty script produced with wit and acted with wit; and Mr. Collinson's music was witty, too. All the satire seemed to me to make its point, but the peak of it was certainly the parody of *Progress Report*. The whole programme danced along from start to finish. Miss Cherry Cottrell made a most appealing heroine, while Mr. Felix Felton's Rumpelstiltskin was an engaging and lively impersonation of loutish malice, of Caliban-on-the-loose.

And after several months of perceptible decline in the standards of quality the Third Programme suddenly reminded us of its early daring and initiative with Mr. MacNeice's adaptation from Petronius, *Trimalchio's Feast*. This was a singularly rich programme which kept one on the alert from the moment the announcer warned us, with breath appropriately bated, that we must expect references not only to the movements of the bowels but also to what he called ho-mo-seck-su-al-ity. Mr. MacNeice's translation and adaptation were brilliant, but what seemed to me to make the programme was the casting of the feature in terms of regional accents, with Mr. Pickles himself as Trimalchio. The result was an impression of complete contemporaneity: here were all the manners, vices, vulgarity, superstition and exuberance of the new-rich caught, as it were, in their Platonic forms; and the programme rose from crescendo to crescendo of comic invention and absurdity. The liveliness of the script communicated itself to the actors, who played their parts with a gaiety and gusto as refreshing as they are rare. Mr. Pickles himself was masterly, the very apotheosis of the Bradford millionaire in all his dreams of saturnalia. What was most striking of all, of course, was the sheer greatness of the comedy, bowels and ho-etc. and all. I cannot recall another instance of a literary masterpiece having been translated into radio with such assurance and success.

WILLIAM SALTER

CONVERSATION

Juvenis: So you were at the Albert Hall last night. What did you make of the new concerto?

Senex: As a whole, not much. But a charming slow movement.

J: You know, you're always saying that. Bartók, Bloch, Prokofiev, Shostakovich: it's always the slow movements you praise. If I were you, I should feel slightly suspicious about this continual preference for *adagio* over *allegro*. It sounds to me uncommonly like sentimentality; a day-dreaming, nostalgic, escapist attitude towards music; a middle-aged unwillingness to plunge into the battle of contemporary life.

S: Perhaps, perhaps . . . I've long since given up feeling frightened about that word "escapist." Indeed, escape is just what I long for as I sit through yet another of those *Allegro frenetico, barbaro e molto ritmico* movements, with their thudding repeated notes, their scurrying scale-passages, and their terrible scrubbing-brush *sforzandi*. It's bad enough in a piano sonata, but nowadays composers insist on writing in that style even for string quartet. Then comes the slow movement, and sometimes—indeed quite often—I recognise a delicate ear, a sense of poetry: in the middle of the desert, an oasis! No wonder I'm pleased.

J: So you think that composers write on two levels of merit, according to the speed of the movement! A surprising phenomenon, and certainly a new one.

S: Not so new. Think of the great scenes in Monteverdi. Think of the Brandenburg Concertos: which do you enjoy more, the bustling, sewing-machine *allegros,* or the divine *adagios?* Even in the B minor Mass, don't you sometimes tire of those interminably jubilant and brilliant choruses in D major? I'm sure you never tire of the *Crucifixus*. And when we get to Haydn and Mozart, we find the prestige of the slow movement openly admitted; when Haydn gave his symphonies in London, it was the *adagios* which were always encored.

J: Anyhow, Beethoven redressed the balance. I know his *adagios* were famous, but it was the *allegro con brios* that announced the new age in music, and broke the eighteenth century mould for ever. And they're still as vital as ever, whereas some of the slow movements of his middle period have acquired a decidedly faded air.

S: That's true; but when we reach his last period, there's a change. From time to time he still wrestles with the angel, for instance in those pounding B flat fugues of Op. 106 and Op. 133; but the heart of the new revelation is contained in the slow sections, the opening fugue of the C sharp minor Quartet, the *Cavatina* of the B flat major, the *Heiliger Dankgesang;* or in those sets of variations which appear to increase in speed, but never "get a move on" in the vulgar sense, and finally dissolve

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into ecstatic, timeless chains of trills, like ripples travelling outward in widening circles over the surface of a pond. Even the nominally fast movements have something curiously static about them. The fact is, they are the product of pure contemplation, contemplation of essences; and contemplation is not an activity pursued at breakneck speed, in music any more than in poetry.

J: But after all, what are we arguing about? You don't want sonatas consisting of four slow movements, any more than I want sonatas consisting of four quick ones. And if we did, we shouldn't be likely to get them, for change and variety are essential to musical composition.

S: And always will be. Nevertheless it's not surprising, but only natural, that so many composers, in all ages, should have poured their profoundest ideas into their slow movements. When to the sessions of sweet silent thought we summon up remembrance of things past, our meditations never proceed at a gallop; nor is it *allegro molto* that we lose ourselves in an *O altitudo!*

J: How Teutonic you sound! Solemnity for solemnity's sake, and constipation regularly mistaken for inspiration. "Ah, those sublime Bruckner and Mahler *adagios!*" I suppose they'd be still more sublime if the reverent hush and the floods of self-pity went on for another twenty minutes. To me, perpetual *adagio* is worse than perpetual *allegro*. Look at *Parsifal*. With the exception of a few passages in the first act, the sheer quality of the musical invention and thinking is probably equal to that of *Tristan* or *Meistersinger,* or the best parts of the *Ring*. What makes the opera so intolerable in performance is the snail's speed: three long acts of *adagio molto*—at least, that is the total effect. Eventually, the slow tempo and sluggish rhythms of late Romantic music became exasperating: the revolt of Stravinsky and Bartók was not only desirable, but inevitable.

S: In that emancipation I rejoice no less than you; but, like most forms of emancipation, it has brought up a host of fresh problems. In the classical Viennese period there was a congruity between fast and slow movements which is now largely lost. For one thing, the contrast of tempo was not so extreme. One great difference between an opening *allegro* of Beethoven and a modern opening *allegro* is that Beethoven feels free to use long calm lyrical themes; and not only for his second subjects, but, if he feels like it, for his first subjects too. Think of the Violin Concerto, the Archduke Trio, or the First Rasoumovsky Quartet: how serenely they float from the very first movement, on melodies which are first cousin to those of the slow movements. But nowadays there's often a gulf between the thematic material of *allegro* and *adagio*. The composer who reveals a strong vein of lyrical invention in his slow movements, is content to build his quick movements out of stamping percussive gestures and brief rhythmic formulas. And there's another problem connected with the harmony. Modern harmony is so subtle and elliptical that it's often only in the slow movements that the listener has time to grasp the logic of a progression or the point of a sudden modulation; in the fast movements, the harmonic changes come so thick and fast that the whole thing resembles a kaleidoscope, in which the listener expects nothing, and is consequently surprised at nothing. When we no longer grasp melody or harmony, inevitably we don't follow the structure either; hence that familiar sensation of a whirl of scudding, thudding, juddering rhythm.

J: The French . . .

S: Ah, yes, the French have found an ingenious partial solution, which consists of slimming and simplifying their scores, so that they sound wayward and charming, if not always quite comprehensible. Stravinsky, in his later works, does the same sort of thing; in fact, he probably invented the device, as he has invented so much else. But what we really want is a fresh start: the re-impregnation of the *allegro* by lyrical feeling. Bartók was moving in that direction when he died. Lennox Berkeley did it, beautifully, in his Symphony; so does Rubbra, often. More and more composers are beginning to see that rhythmic ingenuity and the percussive style have become a dead end. In the words of your own generation, we've had it.

DESMOND SHAWE-TAYLOR

40,000 Years of Modern Art

The Institute of Contemporary Arts' exhibition at the Academy Hall is sub-titled "A Comparison of Primitive and Modern." According to Herbert Read's preface to the catalogue, it is not merely intended to show "that certain modern artists have at certain periods of their development been influenced by primitive art—that is something rather obvious and not requiring an exhibition to demonstrate." It is more concerned to reveal that both primitive and modern art express "like conditions," namely, "a vague sense of insecurity, a cosmic anguish (*Angst*)." It is hardly surprising that the exhibition does not confirm this ambitious assertion. For the eye is immune from persuasion by sophistry, and it would require some pretty elaborate sophistry to prove that there is an affinity between fears that are childlike and fears which are self-conscious. Mr. Read tells us that *Angst* finds expression in "unnaturalistic and abstract" forms. Perhaps. But isn't there a difference between an encirclement by the unreal which results from innocence and a fascination with the unreal which is part of a deliberate search for the extremes of experience? Since the primary aim is not to show specific stylistic influences, it would be carping to complain that the arrangement of the exhibits is not schematic enough.

However, it is reasonable to suggest that even the most general of comparisons would have been made more convincing by a more careful choice of modern examples. As it is, the works by Picasso include not one of the series of sculptures, reliefs and paintings of 1912–14 which represent the most profound penetration of the primitive into the modern that has occurred. Likewise, though the Modigliani sculpture is obviously derivative from West African sculpture, the painting reveals this influence much less than do many of his other pictures in English collections. The impact of primitive art upon German Expressionism is poorly displayed, for nothing by Nolde, Beckmann or Lehmbruck is to be seen. If there are regrettable omissions, there are also incomprehensible inclusions which diminish the effect of a comparison never adequately established. (The essay by Messrs. Archer and Melville in the admirably produced catalogue does partly redeem the exhibition's deficiency in this respect.)

We are left, then, with an enjoyable agglomeration of primitive and modern works of art which includes primitive masterpieces not normally to be seen in London—Nos. 28, 30, 51, 83–5, 98—and excellent works by three artists hardly known here—Lam, Matta and Gonzales.

"Cinderella" at Covent Garden

Could any other choreographer at work to-day have sustained a three act Ballet as cleverly as Mr. Ashton has done in *Cinderella?* Though not consistently original, his invention is both ingenious and beautiful. The logical brilliance of his *Symphonic Variations* and the wit that informed his *Façade* are combined here, and the result is delightful, alternately lyrical and funny. Even apart from the dancing, no other pantomime in London will show us so diverting a pair of Ugly Sisters, so beautiful a Cinderella and so handsome a Prince.

In conventional pantomime, the Ugly Sisters, like the Broker's Men, Buttons and Baron Stoneybroke are only incidental "flat" characters; for pantomime audiences are too young to be let into the sad secrets of their Aunts' private lives. But a ballet audience is less naive and here it is the Ugly Sisters who steal our attention. Unlike the traditional music hall comics whose braces and dickies pop from under the ball-gown straps, Mr. Ashton and Mr. Helpmann give us, as well as magnificent

BERNARD SHAW

on

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FORTNIGHTLY

January 8th—

UNITED NATIONS

by David Woodward

January 22nd—

THE PROBLEM OF LEISURE

by Denys Thompson

★

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clowning, characterisations in the round; and both are noticeably free from the sissy mannerisms of most contemporary female impersonators: one a peaky downtrodden woman, fighting a losing battle with a repressed nymphomania: the other a climber hungrier for social advancement than for men. These two—and Mr. Ashton's choreography—make our evening. Cinderella is delightfully danced by Miss Moira Shearer, but the character is not delineated. She ends as she begins a cold and lovely lay-figure. Michael Soames looks the Prince and the company is up to the standard we have come to expect from them in this kind of ballet. An obvious chance has been missed with the sets and costumes. Prokofiev's music, melodious and danceable, if thin, might either have been matched by some fantastic Chagall—like decor in the same astringent idiom, or have been set off by a spectacular romantic Confection. There are at least six English designers who could have provided one or the other successfully. For the second time this year Mr. Ashton has gone to France and missed an opportunity.

ZOO

The smell assaults you first, from places
Where nightly the padded steps rehearse
Africa's movements in its restless sleep.
Here all our captive faults are nursed
Brooding in their sultry paces.

Like phrases they turn and reiterate
Lost meanings in their striped and alien cages,
Pausing to blink a heavy eye at sun
That curls up the pallid ends of pages
In their history blanked out and done.

Now nothing remains in this sullen world
Where always on a straw-laid floor
They meditate, like prisoners in a war
Fought for lost causes, whose mere act
Of living forced them to participate.

Ignorant of ends and means, knowing
Only the blank reality of exile, they seek
The one vivid proof of life, their shadow
That alone answers when they speak—
A familiar guardian whom, a little way behind,
they tow.

Watching, we turn our backs and move away,
Suddenly ashamed and moved by some glint
Of pity in their shooting eyes, as if to-day
They showed some symptom or some hint
Of our predicament to-morrow, or the next day.

ALAN ROSS

Correspondence

EDUCATIONAL PRIVILEGES

SIR,—Mr. Hill's letter in your issue of December 11th, raises such an important issue—one that will become still more important if the Universities accept the proposals of the Working Party on University Awards — that it is necessary that there should be no misunderstanding.

Although far more numerous, the proportion of students who go to the colleges of Oxford and Cambridge from grammar schools has always been much smaller than the number that go from the Public schools for the obvious reason that unless a grammar school pupil can win an open scholarship or exhibition or a state scholarship, he can seldom afford the cost, whereas ordinarily, parents who can afford to send their sons to the Public schools can also afford to send them to Oxford or Cambridge. In 1937-8 with regard to open scholarships and exhibitions, the position was that 55 per cent. of these went to pupils of schools either Maintained or Direct Grant, and 43 per cent., to pupils from Independent schools. (The remaining 2 per cent. went to pupils from other institutions). In 1946 the figures were only slightly changed—54 per cent. to Maintained and Direct Grant schools and 46 per cent. to other schools. It hardly seems as Mr. Hill suggests, " that the advanced work in the state schools is inferior to that in the public schools."

The figures that Mr. Hill gives for entrance to Oxford show that this year, taking (men) scholars, exhibitioners and commoners together, the Public schools sent 44 per cent. and the Maintained and Direct Grant schools 37 per cent. Personally, for the reasons given above, I should have expected a greater discrepancy. How these figures compare with those in 1938, he does not know but he quotes one Oxford Tutor, who says that his impression is that the grammar schools are sending fewer people to Oxford than they did before the war. It would be interesting if this could be checked by the facts.

But what happened in 1938 or in 1948 is unimportant compared to what will happen in 1951 if the new system of awards come into force. Seventy per cent. of all entrants to Universities will be subsidised by open scholarships and by greatly increased numbers of state and L.E.A. scholarships. The latter are to be awarded on a recommendation of a University or College, who are to base their recommendation on :—

(i) Ability, attainments and inclinations of applicant.
(ii) Personality and character.
(iii) Degree of competition from other applicants.

Numbers (ii) and (iii) will be the crucial factors. The number of applicants for the Oxford and Cambridge Colleges will increase enormously. Practically everyone who thinks he can reach the Advanced —not Scholarship—Standard in the new examination and who wants to go to a University, will put Oxford or Cambridge as his first choice. Whether he should do so, is quite another question. How will a College, having awarded its own open scholarships and, presumably, accepted a certain number of state scholars, decide to fill the remaining places between the L.E.A. scholars and the pupils from the Public schools, who need no financial assistance? In many cases these will be sons or nephews of old students of the college. The way in which these awards are made will prove whether—or not—privilege remains in our older Universities.

SHENA D. SIMON

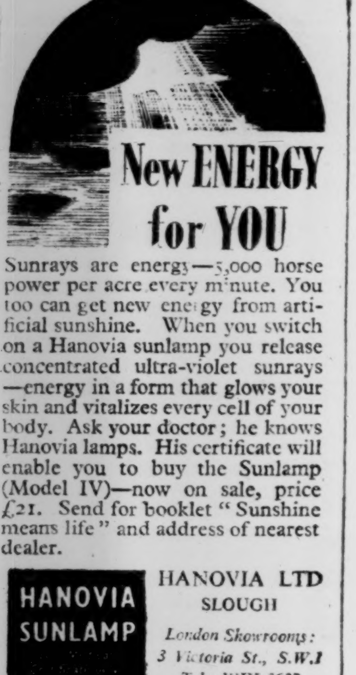
Broomcroft,
Ford Lane,
Didsbury, Manchester.

THE GREEK WAR

SIR,—It may interest you to know that THE NEW STATESMAN & NATION of November, sent registered to a Greek friend, General Sarafis (former C.-in-C. of ELAS and, incidentally, a very appreciative reader of your paper), in Makronisi political exiles' camp, has been returned to me inscribed in an unknown hand "forbiten from the police of the camp." From other sources I understand that this was merely the first intimation of a recent ban on books and periodicals in this particular camp, most of whose inmates are former politicial leaders and high-ranking officers, none accused of anything more definite than being " dangerous to public order and security."

Historically, the word " forbiten " seems to me a most interesting hybrid, reflecting as it does the direct succession of Anglo-Saxon upon Teutonic occupation of Greece. Further, I am told that both commanding officers on Yioura, another internment island, held the same positions under the Germans in the Pavlou Mela camp at Salonica which was until recently, and presumably still is, in use as a political prison. We, and the Americans after us, seem to have taken over from the Germans the same concentration camps. the same collaborators and, I would add, the same resistance.

In this connection and because from time to time we hear a great deal about German generals in our press, it may be opportune to remind your readers of the fate of an Allied commander who received repeated thanks from the British military authorities for his army's contribution to the war effort. General Sarafis was exiled on September 21st, 1946. On February 1st, 1948 he was transferred to Makronisi concentration



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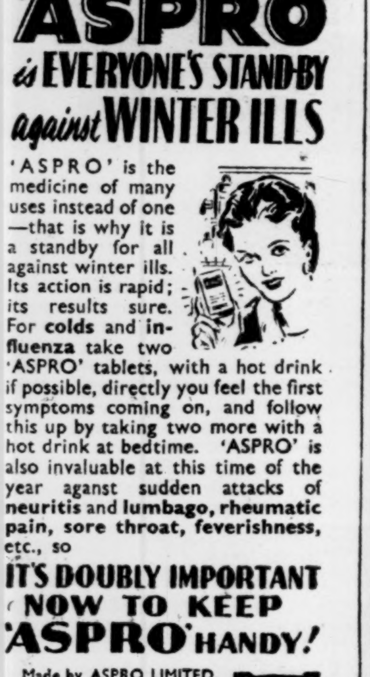

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camp. Three abortive attempts have been made to bring him to trial on charges so fatuous that even in present-day Greece they could not be sustained. Recently he was deprived of his army rank and pension earned by 38 years of distinguished service to his country. Now comes the ban on reading matter; nor is there any reason to suppose that the Athens regime, bankrupt of all constructive policy, has satiated its appetite for persecution.

Then there is the case of Thomas Venetsanopoulos, gendarmerie captain, cited as an example of patriotism by the Greek Government broadcast from London on August 8th 1943, and since imprisoned, exiled, discharged from his service for the very act for which he was commended and now facing trial by court-martial on January 8th; nominally for "subversive propaganda" in the officers' detention camp on Makronisi; but in reality because he refused to sign a "declaration of repentance," recanting his convictions. It is thus that all hope of conciliation is thwarted, whilst our Government's shabby pretence of inability to intervene in Greece must bring an abiding shame upon our country for conniving at such treatment of former allies.

And by way of parting, if not explicitly of Parthian, shot (since I am by no means in actual or even in pretended flight), may I ask our Police Mission, still charged with the training of the Greek police, how it justifies the banning of English books and, especially, of a reputable journal of such moderate and conciliatory tone as THE NEW STATESMAN & NATION?

Bracken Hill, MARION PASCOE
Woking, Surrey

MINEWORKERS' POLICY

SIR,—You suggest that the N.U.M. Executive may accept a concession on, among other things, compensation for redundancy in lieu of extra holidays. If, however, you are as well informed as you presume to be, you would know that the main principles of the scheme for compensation for redundancy were accepted by the Annual Conference of the Union as long ago as July last, and that the actual details of the scheme, including the procedure to be followed in cases where there is a disagreement between the Board and the Union, were accepted by the National Executive Committee on October 28th last.

Any suggestion that the Executive appears to be helping the Board by holding back concessions to the working miner is completely unfounded. The Executive Committee of the Union is concerned with improving the working and living conditions of those engaged in the coalmining industry; if, in attempting to carry out this policy, disagreements arise between the Board and the Union in relation to specific claims, such disagreements must, in accordance with the recognised conciliation machinery for the industry, be resolved by reference to the industry's Conciliation Tribunal, and your paper is not in any way assisting the mining community by suggesting that dissatisfaction, which inevitably arises when a claim put forward on behalf of the workman is rejected, can lead to wildcat strikes.

The Union has co-operated with the National Coal Board because we believe that such co-operation will lead to a better industry and because we believe that the interests of our members are best served by such a policy. To date, no miner has reason to regret the application of such a policy, and I am satisfied that a continuation of this policy will not only benefit the miner, but also the nation. WILL LAWTHER

National Union of Mineworkers, President
5 Westminster Bridge Road, S.E.1.

MARKET IN LAND

SIR,—In discussing the way in which land is still changing hands above its existing use value, Mr. Irvine has not mentioned the real reason, which is very simple. Land differs from other commodities in that each piece of it is unique and occupies a certain immutable geographical position with its attendant advantages and disadvantages.

Supposing I have set my heart on building myself a cottage to retire to in my old age, near a certain village with which I have sentimental associations, and I want it to be on a South slope, with a stream near and woods behind. A plot of land which fulfils all these conditions comes on the market and is put up to auction. But its existing use is agricultural, and agricultural land is worth £50 an acre.

When I get to the auction I find three rivals bidding against me, and soon the price of the coveted acre has reached £50. What then? Do I retire weakly from the contest and wait perhaps ten years for another chance? Or do I and my rivals adjourn to the local and settle the matter by an eliminating match of darts? Or should an official then appear *ex machina* and allot the land to the most deserving among us according to some inscrutable system of points?

How can it be wondered at that in such circumstances the average person will always be willing to pay a premium for the piece of land he particularly wants. In small, personal transactions of this nature, especially in the country, the 1947 Act just cannot work according to the ideas of planners who think in terms of abstract "units of land." What is the answer?

Monk Street Farm, MICHAEL BECKER
Thaxted, Essex.

THE CASE AGAINST CONSCRIPTION

Dr. Joad omits one important argument in support of his case, and not, surely, because it had not occurred to him. Strangely, it is an argument rarely stated in public, though it must have occurred to most people who have served in the Forces.

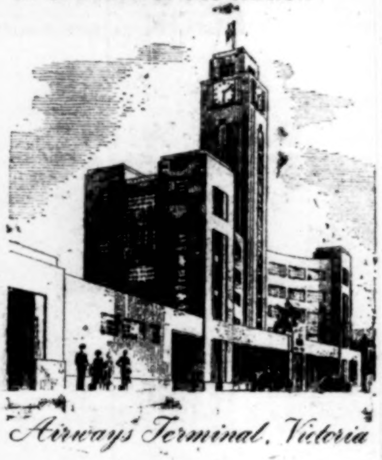
Conscription from the point of view of the thousands of individuals concerned is almost entirely a waste of time. At one of the best times of life young men are herded together, uniformed and despatched to training centres all over the place. A year later—shortly it will be eighteen months—these men are returned to normal life as—as what? Soldiers? That is not possible. Civilians ready to continue where they left off? Certainly not, for no one emerges from twelve months' purposeless existence with his faculties as keen as when he started. (In war-time Service life is purposeful, and therefore we did not worry so much about the wasted hours.) These thousands are more use to the State in only one respect—in the event of war their training will take slightly less time because many of the rough corners are being smoothed now. On the whole the community loses by using its manpower in this way. The individual certainly loses and is not likely, I submit, to think kindly of his fellows for taking this time from him.

The only case for conscription in peace time is that the burdens of the community should be equally shared. Since everyone is defended everyone should help with the defence. That is for the professionals to argue. But is it not possible for both the individual and the community to benefit creatively from this eighteen months' service? Let the individual be fired by a desire to serve the community and the community by a resolve not to waste a moment of his time. I have in mind the activities of the Civilian Conservation Corps in the U.S.A., and those of youth in the reconstruction of Jugoslavia. What this amounts to is a compulsory extension of the educational system where the emphasis is as much on hardening the body as on increasing the resilience of the mind. There is no reason why this should not be done. The framework exists for the wholesale wasting of time, so one has only to rearrange the design within the framework—or does the artist need a different view as well? A. R. HARRIS

6 Cleland Road, Chalfont St. Peter,
Bucks.

THE BOMB AND MR. GLADSTONE

SIR,—In your Christmas Day number Critic remarks that "Mr. Gladstone would no doubt have found theological reasons, instead of reasons of expediency, for a Christian country to rely on the



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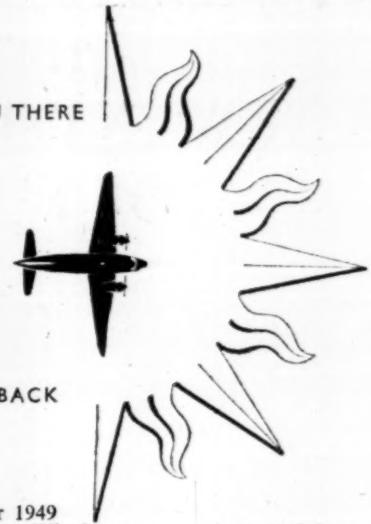

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atom bomb to protect itself against Communism."

In studying the Gladstone Papers, with special reference to foreign policy, I have discovered no instance of his use of theology—whether interpreted strictly, or in the wider sense that Critic's context demands—as a "cover-story" to justify *raison d'état*. Can Critic provide any instance to justify his imputation?

Again, can he demonstrate from Mr. Gladstone's career that that statesman would not have been at least as severely troubled about the use of the atom bomb as are many leading Christian thinkers to-day? Critic's assumption, that he would have approved of the use of the bomb at all, does not seem necessarily justified by what is known of Mr. Gladstone's course in politics. M. R. D. FOOT

16 Park Town, Oxford.

[Critic writes: "Certainly Mr. Gladstone would have been severely troubled about the use of the atom bomb. Moral issues deeply disturbed him. I can readily find instances of his use of moral or religious rationalisation to justify *raison d'état*. He was, for example, notably ingenious in finding justification for the Crimean war when it came, although throughout the negotiations he had declared that to fight for Turkey against Russia on such an issue would be wholly unjustifiable. Mr. Foot may find the full details in *The Triumph of Lord Palmerston* by Kingsley Martin. (*Allen and Unwin* 1924)."—ED., *N. S. & N.*]

AUSTRIAN SOCIALISTS

SIR,—Your correspondent's disparaging remarks about the Austrian Socialists (*Austrian Façade*, THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION, December 11th) are grossly unjust to the only organised and militant force in that country which, on the border of the Iron Curtain, is upholding the ideals of democracy. First he accuses the Austrian Socialists of "doctrinaire intolerance"; this was the argument used by the bourgeois against Otto Bauer, the late leader of the Austrian Socialists. He then proceeds to accuse them of just the opposite crime, namely to have betrayed the legacy of Otto Bauer and to have "shifted to the Right." It is not true that the Socialist Party "has been moving steadily towards the Right" out of sheer opportunism or lack of revolutionary tradition. The Austrian Socialists are, much to their regret, pushed to the Right by Communist pressure and by their foremost duty to secure the democratic basis for society.

Your correspondent points out that "Communism has never been a strong force in Austria." The Communist Party has never been, but the Soviet Union, with its firm grip on the country, is! The vices or virtues of American Capitalism may be a matter for academic discussion in Austria (which, by the way, was saved from starvation by American deliveries) but the vices or virtues of Soviet totalitarianism are of more than academic importance—though your correspondent shuts his eyes to that fact. Before I accuse the Austrian Socialists of "fear of Russia," I would investigate whether or not this fear is justified. There can be no doubt about the outcome of such an investigation. It is true that "the Socialists are the Junior Partners in the coalition," but this is rather the fault of the 1945 electors than theirs, as these electors made the Right-wing People's Party the strongest. It is ridiculous to say that "no praise for what may be considered commendable features of the 'People's Democracies'... is tolerated" by the Austrian Socialists. Perhaps your correspondent informs us first which features of the Communist regimes seem to be "commendable" to him, then we shall be able to judge. The "slightest deviation from the present policy of the party" is not followed by expulsion, only one flagrant case of breach of discipline, comparable to Mr. Platts-Mills's, was followed by so severe a measure.

The Austrian Socialists are far from blameless and they are not above criticism. Yet no criticism can be regarded as just and unbiased which does not take into account the tremendous objective difficulties they have to face, and does not pay tribute to their heroic endeavours to preserve democracy.

21 Old Manor Court, LEONORE ORR
Abbey Road, N.W.8.

SECOND FRONT

SIR,—In discussing General Eisenhower's *Crusade in Europe* Critic raises an old controversy in which few of us can refrain from participating. It is the question of a Second Front in Western Europe in 1942. From my reading of the book, however, I am bound to say that Critic gives a misleading impression of what General Eisenhower actually felt about this issue.

The Americans, as is well known, favoured an operation, on a limited scale (to be known as "Sledgehammer") to seize and seal off the Cherbourg peninsula, which could subsequently be used as a base for future exploitation. High British military opinion was strongly opposed to this strategy. What Critic does not make clear is that Eisenhower himself came round to the British view. With characteristic generosity he writes (page 79):

"Later developments have convinced me that those who held the Sledgehammer operation to be unwise at the moment were correct in their evaluation of the problem. Our limited-range fighter aircraft could not have provided sufficiently effective air cover over the Cotentin or Brittany peninsulas, against the German air strength as it then existed. At least, the operation would have been very costly. Another reason is that out of the North-West African operation flowed benefits to the Allied nations that were felt all through the war and materially helped to achieve the great victory when the invasion actually took place in 1944. Only meagre advantages would have followed the capture of Cherbourg; the desirable features of that project were merely that it would have initiated a small "second front" at once and would have launched our first offensive effort in the direction and along the same line that would later be taken by our full-out assault."

That, you will agree, gives a very different impression from Critic. May I add, also, that Critic dwells too much on the defences of the French coast which were constructed between 1942 and 1944. It is not the coastal defences that are the obstacle to an assault landing. The attacker having a wide choice can always blast a way through. The danger comes from the counter-offensive before the assailant has built up his strength on land. That was when the crisis occurred both at Salerno and at Anzio. It did not occur in Normandy because by 1944 we possessed air forces which could drive the Germans out of the sky and "clobber" the lines of communication of their troops in the battle areas.

But this advantage—and it was all-important—we did not enjoy in 1942.

Tunbridge Wells. CHRISTOPHER BUCKLEY

INDONESIA

SIR,—The Indonesian issue is one in which many firm believers in democracy (such as I) find singular difficulty in reconciling theory with facts. It is not an issue in which any intellectually honest person can reduce everything to a neat series of blacks and whites. There are so many greys (as everyone realises, except the Marxists).

I was in Java in the spring of 1946. I saw corpses of Dutch women and children, who had looked to liberation from Japanese internment, floating in the canal at Batavia. They were murdered—by supporters of the Republic.

It is easy for the Australian delegate to Uno to declaim that this is "worse than the Germans did to Holland in 1940." But those of us with some personal knowledge of the facts do not find it easy to accept this however much we sympathise with the desire for self-determination. Surely the Dutch may be forgiven if they do not wish to repeat our own experience in Burma? R. W. G. BRYANT

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BOOKS IN GENERAL

Few literary forms are so dead, nowadays, as the once flourishing art of Political Satire. In an age as passionately addicted to political controversy as our own, this may seem singular, though reasons for its decline are not difficult to find. The law of libel is one. It is axiomatic that satire demands from the thing satirised a latitude within which to caricature and to exaggerate; while it may well be that we live in a time of which the simple actuality is such as to defy all efforts at exaggeration. Laputan science, for example, seems mere reasonableness by the side of the atomic bomb. Again, the evidence of the past suggests that the art is one likely to prosper only when the target aimed at consists of a small, closed oligarchy—whether in Athens, in Rome, in Paris, or in London—of which the personal characteristics, the intimate foibles, are familiar both to those who write of them and to those who read. Such conditions have scarcely obtained in English politics since the closing years of the eighteenth century, so that it is not surprising if we are obliged to cast back to this period when in search of genuinely entertaining matter of the kind. These were the years when *The Rolliad* and *The Anti-Jacobin* were passing through their endless editions; and, in the total absence of such things of our own, it is interesting to take a glance at these now outmoded but very lively works.

The Rolliad, the first and more obscure of the two, came out in 1784, in the first year of William Pitt's long reign, and is a Whig, or Foxite, publication, compiled by an anonymous collection of the members of Brooks's Club, whose names have reached us by tradition rather than by direct evidence; Tierney, Sheridan, General Burgoyne (of Saratoga), Burke's brother Richard, Ellis, Dr. Lawrence, Tickell, and Fitzpatrick. It is, in form, an ingenious and original piece of work, purporting to be a critical commentary on a totally non-existent epic poem in twelve books, which deals with the pedigree and adventures of a Mr. Rolle, a blockheaded Devonshire Member and fervent admirer of Pitt. Though the poem itself is, as has been said, non-existent, the pages of the criticism are enlivened by copious alleged quotations from it, the manner of which may perhaps be best suggested by a brief extract:

> The Poem opens with a most laboured and masterly description of a storm. *Rollo's* state of mind in this arduous situation is finely painted:
>
> Now *Rollo* storms more loudly than the wind,
> Now doubts and black despair perplex his mind;
> Hopeless to see his vessel safely harbour'd,
> He hardly knows his starboard from his larboard!
>
> That a hero in distress should not know his right hand from his left, is most natural and affecting; in other hands, indeed, it would not have appeared sufficiently poetical, but the technical expressions of our author convey the idea in all the blaze of metaphor.

But the hapless Mr. Rolle, and his precursors, the Rollos, are little more than stalking-horses: the satirist is after bigger game, and it is soon Mr. Pitt himself who engages his attentions:

> Pert without fire, without experience sage,
> Young with more art than *Shelburne* glean'd from age,
> Too proud from pilfer'd greatness to descend,
> Too humble not to call *Dundas* his friend,
> In solemn dignity and sullen state,
> This new Octavius rises to debate!
> Mild and more mild he sees each placid row
> Of Country Gentlemen with rapture glow;
> He sees convulsed with sympathetic throbs,
> Apprentice Peers, and deputy Nabobs!

And, a little later:

> Above the rest, majestically great,
> Behold the infant Atlas of the state,
> The matchless miracle of modern days,
> In whom Britannia to the world displays
> A sight to make surrounding nations stare;
> A kingdom trusted to a school-boy's care.

For, of course, it was Pitt's extreme youth which at that time chiefly enraged his adversaries: he was then barely twenty-five.

But enough, perhaps, has been cited to show that this is good, tough, sinewy, satirical writing, that would hardly have been forgotten had not Pitt and his friends taken their revenge, if somewhat tardily, in the really devastating verses which later appeared weekly, from November, 1797, to July, 1798, in the columns of the *Anti-Jacobin*. This journal, which was likewise a collaboration (being the united work of Canning, Frere, Gifford, and that Ellis who had also in his time written for *The Rolliad*) struck back, and with interest, at the Whigs; and in so striking produced, almost by accident, a minor classic.

It is true, of course, that its authors had some exceptionally fine targets. The foggy Rousseauism of the early days of the French Revolution cleared occasionally to reveal the most magnificent sitting birds: Southey's mawkish sentimentality, Godwin's not entirely disingenuous outcryings for Political Justice, the sob-drenched Wertherites, the sodden imbecilities of Kotzebue. To the sharp and precise eyes of the two youthful ex-Etonians, Canning and Frere, grounded in the rational sagacity of eighteenth-century culture, the evolutions of these whirling dervishes of Progress must have appeared peculiar indeed; and admirably did they set out so to exhibit them.

The *Anti-Jacobin* got into its stride early. In its second issue appeared Canning's and Frere's inimitable parody ("absolutely performed in half an hour") of Southey's early Sapphics: *The Friend of Humanity and the Knife Grinder*:

> Needy Knife-grinder! whither are you going?
> Rough is the road, your wheel is out of order—
> Bleak blows the blast;—your hat has got a hole in't,
> So have your breeches!

which, as everyone knows, ends with the knife-grinder confessing that his dishevelment is not due to "some rich man" having "tyrannically used" him, but to a drunken scuffle "at the Chequers": a disappointment which so afflicts the Friend of Humanity that he "kicks the knife-grinder, overturns his wheel, and exits in a transport of . . . universal philanthropy."

But the highest achievement of *The Anti-Jacobin* contributors rests in their three longer works: two of them, *The Progress of Man* and the *Loves of the Triangles*, parodies of recently published poems; and one, *The Rovers; or, The Double Arrangement*, of a play. Since the works parodied are themselves quite dead, a word of explanation may be necessary. *The Progress of Man* is based upon a long didactic poem called *The Progress of Civil Society* by Richard Payne Knight, in which was traced, in the manner made fashionable by Rousseau, the descent of man from his estate of Noble Savage. Not only did the editors of *The Anti-Jacobin* think poorly of Knight's philosophical doctrines; they also disapproved of his political affiliations with Fox. And this is what they made of his poem:

> Let us a plainer, steadier theme pursue—
> Mark the grim savage scoop his light canoe;
> Mark the dark rook, on pendant branches hung,
> With anxious fondness feed her cawing young.—
> Mark the fell leopard through the desert prowl,
> Fish prey on fish, and fowl regale on fowl;
> How Lybian tigers' chawdrons love assails,
> And warms, midst seas of ice, the melting whales;—
> Cools the crimpt cod, fierce pangs to perch imparts,
> Shrinks shrivell'd shrimps, but opens oysters' hearts;—
> Then say, how all these things together tend
> To one great truth, prime object, and good end?
> First—to each living thing, whate'er its kind,
> Some lot, some part, some station is assign'd.
> The feather'd race with pinions skim the *air*[1]—
> Not so the mackarel, and still less the bear:
> *This* roams the *wood*, carniv'rous, for his prey;
> *That* with soft roe,[2] pursues his *watery* way:—
> *This* slain by hunters yields his shaggy hide;
> *That*, caught by fishers, is on *Sundays* cried.

Anyone in the least degree familiar with the flatter transports of eighteenth-century minor verse will see that it is all there: the balanced antitheses that mean nothing; the pompous italicising of the obvious; nor is there absent that other characteristic practice of the period—the gravely imbecile footnote. In the above passage, for example, the following words are thus annotated: 1. *Air.* Birds fly. 2. *Soft roe.* The mackarel. There are also *hard-roed* mackarel. *Sed de his alio loco.*

The Loves of the Triangles is a still more endearing piece of foolery, based upon Erasmus Darwin's vast inane, *The Botanic Garden*, one section of which is entitled *The Loves of the Plants*. The really brilliant quality of its nonsense cannot, perhaps, be better indicated in brief than by a few excerpts from what is gravely denominated the Argument to the First Canto:

> Warning to the Profane not to approach—Nymphs and Deities of Mathematical Mythology—Cyclops of a pensive turn—Pendulums, on the contrary, playful—and why? . . . Optics of a licentious Disposition—distinguished by her Telescope and Green Spectacles.—Hyde Park Gate on a Sunday morning . . . Rectangle, a Magician, educated by Plato and Menecmus—in love with Three Curves at the same time—served by Gins, or Genii—transforms himself into a Cone . . . King Lear and his Three Daughters—Derby Diligence—Catherine Wheel.—Catastrophe of Mr. Gingham, with his Wife and Three Daughters overturned in a One-Horse Chaise . . .

It was not, however, until June 4th, 1798, when it published the first of its two extracts from *The Rovers*, its parody of the contemporary German drama of sentiment, that *The Anti-Jacobin* reached its summit. This opens at "a Room at an inn, at Weimar," where Matilda is discovered "in a Great Coat and Riding Habit." She soliloquises:

> Oh Casimere!—How often have the thoughts of thee served to amuse these moments of expectation!—What a difference, alas!—Dinner—it is taken away as soon as over, and we regret it not!—It returns again with the return of appetite—The beef of to-morrow will succeed to the mutton of to-day, as the mutton of to-day succeeded to the veal of yesterday.—But when once the heart has been occupied by a beloved object, in vain would we attempt to supply the chasm by another.

Cecilia enters, and, in response to the other's inquiry as to the state of the road, answers: "The way was dusty, Madam, but the weather was delightful. It recalled to me those blissful moments when the rays of desire first vibrated through my soul."

"Thank heaven!" (says Matilda). "I have at last found a heart in unison with my own."

A little more rhapsodising, and then follows a famous, and sanitative, passage:

> *Cec.* I had been long looking out for a congenial spirit!—my heart was withered—but the beams of yours have rekindled it!
>
> *Mat.* A sudden thought strikes me—Let us swear an eternal friendship.

They dine; and the scene changes to "a subterraneous vault in the Abbey of Quedlinburgh"—"with Coffins, 'Scutcheons, Death's Heads and Cross-bones." Rogero, in his dungeon, indulges in a long soliloquy in the best Gothick manner, and concludes by singing a song about his passion for sweet Matilda Pottingen:

> That was the daughter of my Tu-
> tor, Law Professor at the U-
> niversity of Gottingen.

Of the Act which follows, we can say no more than that it opens with two English noblemen, Puddingfield and Beefington, who, in a lodging-house, await the news of the signing of Magna Charta; and that it ends in a magnificent confusion in which Troubadours, Grenadiers and Quintus Curtius are all inextricably mixed up together, in a fashion worthy of the pen of Mr. Beerbohm's Ladbroke Brown.

Then, in the last issue of all, the whole of the contributors turned serious and joined forces to produce a longish poem, *The New Morality*. Since it is improbable that the principles of this work would find favour with advanced opinion to-day, we will say nothing about its principles, but confine ourselves to remarking that, considered purely as a poem, it has been characterised by George Saintsbury—who was no bad judge of such matters—as reaching heights not attained since the days of Dryden.

It was the last flicker. For good or bad, the age of political satire was over. It had left a residue that can still amuse; its shafts are still not quite—to use a present-day jargon—devoid of fire-power.

MORCHARD BISHOP

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The Arabs. By PHILIP K. HITTI. *Macmillan.* 10*s*. 6*d*.

A Short History of The Middle East. By GEORGE E. KIRK. *Methuen.* 16*s*.

These two books are complementary: the statics and the dynamics of the Middle East ("the Arab world with certain neighbouring countries"). There are minor blemishes in Mr. Hitti's "popular" abridgement of his great *History of the Arabs.* The sensitive reader of this paper may flinch at "Mount Sinai, of Biblical fame" (a gloss hardly needed for the American electorate?); at "Damascus, from whose walls St. Paul was let down in a basket"; and at "Caliph Abd-al-Rahman's court, one of the most glamorous in Europe." (Yet the author assumes that Damietta will be recognised under his Arab "Dimyat.") "Ball and mallets (a sort of croquet or hockey)" is about as convincing a pastime as "a sort of bridge or poker." I find little support for his Arabic derivations of gibbet, average and cable; and "tennis . . . probably from Tinnis, the Arabic name of an Egyptian city noted for its linen fabrics, which may have been used for tennis-balls," reminds me of the conscientious curator's explanation of a half-brick shown in the Cairo Museum: "Possibly employed as a missile." Abridgement for popularisation is sad work, as Lawrence found with his *Revolt in the Desert.*

Let not such defects deter the student from Mr. Hitti's informative and stirring account of one of the most startling and dazzling achievements in recorded history. His chapter, "The Koran and the Faith," is a masterly exposition of a Book whose inherent difficulties are enhanced by its exceptional dependence upon the majesty of the original language. His "March of Islam" seems to describe the bursting of a dam into a mighty flood of religious emotion and physical triumph carrying all before it. Indeed, the Arab contribution to world progress, at its time and for its time, must rank with (but after) those of Palestine, Greece and Rome, though its permanence and universality seem less assured. "As early as the days of the Caliph al-Mamun (813 A.D.) pharmacists had to pass an examination." The *Canon* of Avicenna (Ibn-Sina), the chief guide to medical science in the West from the twelfth to the seventeenth century, has remained "a medical bible for a longer period than any other work." It is the eternal glory of Islam that it succeeded for the first time in human thought in reconciling monotheism—the greatest contribution of the ancient Semitic world—with Greek philosophy, the greatest contribution of the ancient Indo-European world. Mr. Hitti reminds us that the Crusades meant much more for the Occident than the Orient:

> In Syria they left in their wake havoc and ruin and throughout the Near East they bequeathed a legacy of ill will between Moslems and Christians that has not yet been forgotten.

The high Arab-Jewish civilisation of Baghdad, Spain and Sicily make wistful reading to-day, for it seems to relegate twentieth-century Palestine to one of the great might-have-beens of history. Perhaps a like but remoter might-have-been flickered and faded thirteen centuries ago; Mr. Kirk recalls how Muhammad, regarding himself as successor of some of the major Hebrew prophets, adopted some Jewish forms of worship, especially that of facing Jerusalem when at prayer; and only when his thesis was not accepted by the Medinah Jews, transferred his Qibla to the Kaaba at Mecca.

Mr. Kirk, conducting us from the Rise of Islam to 1948, reveals with exact objectivity, how and why things are as they are to-day throughout the Near East. He cites a fine assessment between the Hellenists who depreciate, and the Arabists who exaggerate, the mediæval Moslem achievement:

> Islamic medicine and science reflected the light of the Hellenic sun, when its day had fled; and shone like a moon, illuminating the darkest night of the European Middle Ages; some bright stars shed their own light, but moon and stars alike faded into the dawn of a new day—the Renaissance.

There are timely reminders: so ill-founded is the common fallacy that Islam offered to the conquered the alternative of conversion, or the sword, that "since Moslems were exempt from the annual tribute, the conversion of non-Moslems," far from being thus forced, "was actually discouraged"—the fisc, as so often in history, overriding the faith. There is allusion to a fifteenth-century tariff war, when "the exacting Sultan Bars-bay raised his excise duty on pepper to 160 per cent., and the Venetians successfully brought pressure upon him by threatening to withdraw their merchants from Alexandria." The Wahhabi Movement and Kingdom are succinctly summarised. Though by no means "pro-Arab"—the tendencious and reason-excluding label of this controversy—Mr. Kirk finds the Permanent Mandates Commission "ignoring the realities of the Palestine situation."

Two small slips in this singularly accurate account seem worth correcting for later editions. The Khedive was not "made to adopt the title of Sultan"; he was demoted to ex-Khedive—even to plain Pasha. The Sultanate was accorded to Prince Hussin, as founder of the new dynasty; under a Protectorate which, despite popular theories, was not "proclaimed as a temporary expedient" but was intended to remain.

The author gives a balanced appreciation of Muhammad Ali's material development of Egypt, his wise encouragement of foreigners and his utter disregard for the Egyptians. His strictures upon "the increase in quantity and decrease in standard of British officials appointed in Egypt after Cromer"—or rather Gorst who was at least as critical—are certainly justified. But his extreme impartiality impels him to an acid testing of British motives in Egypt—facts being easier to recapture than atmosphere; and any pronouncements by British statesmen or writers that evacuation would leave the Egyptians a prey to corruption and oppression, or that "our foremost concern had been to secure the humane and stable administration of the Egyptian masses," he brands as "contemporary Egyptophobia": a sweeping generalisation which will hardly be endorsed by any survivors with early first-hand knowledge of the spirit of instructions received and of their execution, or of the slough of despond from which the masses were being rescued, and into which they might so easily sink again.

A penetrating analysis of the Arab League, which, as we have recently seen, not even Zionism can hold together, leads to the conclusion that there may be "at least two generations before the spread of education corrects the present over-emphasis on politics and neglect of economics, unless the process is accelerated by a social revolution induced from outside the Arab world." And so we are left in sympathetic and anxious contemplation of a Near East which, after giving to humanity the first two civilisations and the three great faiths, was massacred by the Mongols, corrupted and stifled by the Ottomans; dazzled, "developed" for good—and ill; sometimes exploited, now bitterly alienated by the West; a wanderer between two worlds, that has exchanged the light of religion for the heat of nationalism; is tired, ill-led, ill-fed; incapable of self-defence yet spurning assistance; content with the form rather than the fact of democracy; awaiting perhaps Aristotle's beneficent despot—but he must come soon!—a Moslem Cromer, an Arab Mustafa Kemal.

In all, this concise yet comprehensive study is the best Near Eastern manual I have yet seen, in any language. It is practical as well as outspoken, stimulating the reader to a critical immediate interest in the daily news of this fateful region—and in the sometimes quaint refractions of Hansard. There should be a copy in every senior school (where pupils might well be encouraged to keep it posted to date), in every college and public library throughout the realm, and in every British Representation and Institute abroad.

RONALD STORRS

NEW NOVELS

A Summer to Decide. By PAMELA HANSFORD JOHNSON. *Michael Joseph.* 10*s*. 6*d*.

The Rage of the Vulture. By ALAN MOOREHEAD. *Hamish Hamilton.* 9*s*.

Some Trust in Chariots. By JACK JONES. *Hamish Hamilton.* 12*s*. 6*d*.

The Still Waters. By GWYN JONES. *Peter Davies.* 8*s*. 6*d*.

The Villa Mistral. By RICHARD STRACHEY. *Secker & Warburg.* 9*s*. 6*d*.

Describing the genesis of the "Tietjens" novels, Ford Madox Ford has told how he wanted "the novelist to appear in his really proud position as historian of his own time." To be the historian of his own time is a seductive ambition for any novelist, even though, as a moment's glance at the world's novelists shows, few have seriously aimed at it and still fewer achieved it. But it was, I fancy, with something of the sort in mind that Miss Pamela Hansford Johnson set out to write her trilogy, of which *A Summer to Decide* is the final volume. The novels that preceded it I have not read, but plainly the whole work has been so designed that each part may be read separately. Miss Johnson possesses the most enviable technical gifts: she is a highly expert, highly professional, writer; you feel that she is prepared to take on any subject, any situation. And yet it seems to me that in *A Summer to Decide* she is betrayed by her very expertness. The structure of her novel is complex. Setting her action in London in 1947, Miss Johnson, through her narrator Claud Pickering, tells the inter-related stories of three groups of characters, of Pickering himself, an art historian working in a gallery off Bond Street, of his sister Charmian and her marriage with Evan Sholto, and of John Field and his wife; and behind them all looms the dynamic figure of Lady Helena, Pickering's step-mother, whom Miss Johnson courageously kills off early in the novel. The observation of the London scene is brilliant: Miss Johnson catches almost perfectly the very feel of life in those grim early months of 1947, those months of ice and power-cuts and strain; and she is almost as successful in rendering the intellectual and æsthetic fashions of the time. Indeed, she is almost too successful; when I found Pickering hunting through second-hand bookshops for copies of the early novels of F. M. Ford I could scarcely help thinking that he really was too formidably up-to-the-minute, too firmly set in the centre of highbrow taste. But what of the characters, the smarmy bounders who work as private secretaries to M.P.s and sell inside information to the press, who work as car-salesmen, who are in on a good thing in the second-hand car racket, and end up in the dock of the Old Bailey; the nice girls who are married to them and remain so out of a mistaken sense of duty; the poisonous mothers-in-law who persecute them with emotional blackmail; the cultured, wealthy Americans who might be walking embodiments of what Pickering (who, surprisingly in so cultured a man, shares Mr. Vyshinsky's ignorance of morbid psychology) calls American "war-psychosis"? Individually, all are real, all convince, all are most shrewdly and sharply observed. And yet, brought together in the complex pattern of the novel, they failed entirely to convince me; they moved from theatrical scene to theatrical scene. Somewhere, something had gone wrong with them. What it is is plain. We see them all the time through the eyes of Pickering, a distorting medium, as a first-person narrator so easily becomes in fiction. Their sufferings are real and acceptable; Pickering's much less so, for he is altogether too intense a young man and, despite his culture, as charmless and solemn a prig as I have met in contemporary fiction. It is his judgments, his interpretations of action and characters that bathe the novel in the atmosphere of pretentiousness which seems to me to pervade it, for they invest the characters with an importance, a significance, which they are really not big enough to carry; and the result is a subtle falsification, a theatrical over-emphasis.

Attempting less, Mr. Moorehead has been more successful. As the best of contemporary war-correspondents, he may be considered one of the historians of our time in his own right, and in his first novel, *The Rage of the Vulture,* he isolates one incident in the history of our time. His scene is the imaginary native state of Kandahar, in the North-West Frontier, at the time of the division of India into the two dominions. Its ruler is Hindu, its population Moslem with large Hindu and Sikh minorities; no one yet knows to which dominion the state will accede; and the tribes, the British authority having been withdrawn, are about to come down from the mountains. In the town of Kandahar itself is a handful of British, permanent residents, who must now leave—if they can get out, if aeroplanes and buses are available. Mr. Moorehead's is an exciting novel in which, it seems to me, all the parties in the confused struggle are seen with fairness and sympathy. The only failure lies, I think, in the subsidiary story of the redemption of the neurotic hero, who lives self-branded by memories of cowardice in a German prisoner-of-war camp; but as a whole Mr. Moorehead's picture of this remote corner of India is crowded, vivid and enlightening.

Mr. Jack Jones is also a historian—a local historian. Reading *Some Trust in Chariots* is like nothing so much as travelling from Paddington to Cardiff in the company of an extremely loquacious gentleman who has button-holed you at Slough and means to keep you button-holed until well past Pontypool Road. In full relentless spate they pour out, the story of his life, reminiscences of his boyhood, scandal about his neighbours. There is no escape. You do not so much listen as are bemused. The earnest confidential face looms ever nearer to yours. From time to time surreptitiously you wipe away the stray spit. Does this suggest *Some Trust in Chariots* is a bore? I hope not; for I can well believe that anyone who had not before read a chronicle novel would find it fascinating in the extreme.

Mr. Gwyn Jones seems to me the best writer of short stories to have come out of Wales since Mr. Rhys Davies. *The Still Waters* is a very good collection indeed. The longest story in the book, *The Green Island,* is superb, challenging comparison with the best of Lawrence—a study of lust and sexual revenge on the part of a peasant against a city slicker. Not that Mr. Gwyn Jones owes any debt to Lawrence: he is a highly individual writer. But, like Lawrence, he has a poetic style which enables him to seize the living quality of landscape and that intuitive sense of symbolism which Mr. Forster in *Aspects of the Novel* calls prophetic. Like Lawrence, too, he seems to me to need the space of the long short story in order to get his best effects. At his finest, in *The Green Island* and *The Prisoners,* he is at once magical and menacing.

The dictionary defines the mistral as a "cold N.W. wind in Mediterranean provinces of France," but the wind that blows through Mr. Strachey's novel plainly emanates from Mr. Norman Douglas's Capri. It must be admitted that by the time it reaches Mr. Strachey's Provence that famous frolic air has lost most of its tonic quality. *The Villa Mistral* is amusing, but not amusing enough for a novel which must from its very nature remind the reader of the work of Mr. Huxley, Mr. Compton Mackenzie, Mr. Richard Oke and Mr. Francis Steegmuller, not to mention that of Mr. Douglas himself.

WALTER ALLEN

A VIRTUOSO

John Aubrey and his Friends. By ANTHONY POWELL. *Eyre and Spottiswoode.* 18*s.*

John Aubrey, the gay virtuoso, and Anthony Wood, the crabbed pedant, are two of the most opposite characters who ever formed a single friendship, and as the one can only interest scholars, the other has a fatal fascination for dilettanti. The brevity of his *Brief Lives* (originally written as drafts for Wood), their elegance (which Wood contrived to crush out), and their free anecdotes (which he either censured or expurgated) have all contributed to form the portrait of a mere engaging bohemian. In the end Wood repaid his invaluable services by treating him shabbily and describing him as "a shiftless person, roving and maggoty-headed and sometimes little better than crazed." And yet Aubrey was a foundation-member of the Royal Society, a useful antiquary, a friend of Hobbes and Harrington, Petty and Wren and Hooke, and, above all, an exquisite stylist. It is time his life was written by a scholar.

Fortunately, Mr. Powell is a scholar. His book is a model biography. He has taken infinite pains, and concealed the pains he has taken. It is well written, fully and unpretentiously documented, and illustrated with some of Aubrey's own water-colours, still with the rest of his papers in the Bodleian Library; and it enables us to draw some interesting conclusions.

Aubrey's family was Welsh, but, like other Welsh families (including the Herberts), it had settled in Wiltshire, and it was Wiltshire, not Wales, that drew out the romantic quality in his character. There he lived, at first, in his Palladian home, "that lovely seat" of Easton Piers, with its terraced garden and fountain and "volant Mercury"; there he visited Wilton "an Arcadian place and a Paradise," and wandered among "romancy plains and boskages" where "the Muses were wont to appear to Sir Philip Sydney"; there he went hunting with his friend Colonel Long, whom "the Muses did accompany with his Hawkes and Spaniells." It was while hunting in Wiltshire that Aubrey one day lit upon the giant stones of Avebury, and, leaving the hounds to muse among those neglected ruins, evolved the revolutionary theory of their Druid origin. In his love of places, of "eremiticall Solitudes" and the country houses and gardens of his friends, Aubrey was the first romantic: in fact, he disputes with the prosaic Evelyn the first use of the word, or at least its first application to places. Neither Evelyn nor Aubrey dated their work, but there is no doubt which best deserves the credit. "Our sport," says Aubrey, speaking of hawking in Wiltshire, "was very good and in a Romantic country: the Prospects noble and vast, the downe stock't with numerous Flocks of Sheep, the Turfe rich and fragrant with Thyme and Burnet . . ."; and when he peopled the "delicate grottos" and "delicious walkes in the Woods" with nymphs and Muses, they were not conventional fictions. He believed in the genius of the place. No one has evoked as vividly as this elegant Cavalier the authentic *numina* of the countryside.

If Aubrey applied his romanticism in Wiltshire, he perhaps derived it from Wales. Readers of the *Conway Letters* or of Aubrey's cousin Henry Vaughan will recognise that possible origin; and it was from Wales that the metaphysical poets came, on the Welsh borders that the old cavalier lords kept their courts and the fugitive writers found their patrons. But that exquisite romanticism of the cavalier age, which Vandyke has captured in paint and Aubrey in prose, had also another more material background. Like so many of his friends, Aubrey was never free from debt, and the second part of his life, when all projects

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MICHAEL JOSEPH

of reform and profitable matrimony had failed and lawsuits had multiplied upon him, was spent in what he called a "happy delitescency," hiding from his creditors. Sometimes he thought of retiring to a monastery abroad or accepting a benefice in the Established Church; but "Lord! how shall I look in a Cassock!" he exclaimed, and dismissed that thought. His patrons offered him prospects in the New World: he had thoughts of Maryland and Jamaica, Pennsylvania and New York, Bermuda and "the delicate island" of Tobago. But these, too, he rejected, "for why should I, at this time of day, and being of a Monastic humour, make myself a slave and roast myselfe for Wealth?" In the end he stayed in England, either hiding in Wiltshire and giving himself out to be in Bologna, or buried in the hospitable houses of his friends—his cousin, Sir John Aubrey at Boarstall, Lord Abingdon at Rycote, Lord Thanet in Kent, and, most congenial of all, the rich virtuoso Edmund Wyld in Shropshire. He died in Oxford, the place which, after Wiltshire, he seems most to have loved, drawn thither throughout his life by the study of antiquities, the company of the cantankerous Wood, and the recollection of his undergraduate days, that happiest time "when ingeniose youths, as rosebuds, imbibe the morning dew."

At 27 Aubrey, in one of his moods of introspection, asked himself what he had done to justify his life, and answered, "Truly nothing, only umbrages: Osney abbey ruines, etc., antiquities"; and at another time he likened himself to a whetstone, that sharpened the wits of others, but itself was blunt. His nature was sensitive, not operative, "mightily susceptible of fascination," and to the intellectual life of his century he gave not substance but quality; but since it is quality that immortalises, he deserves that his life should be written. He also deserves that his *Brief Lives* should at last be fully published. Fortunately, we learn that Mr. Powell is to edit them. This book is a guarantee that he will do it well.

H. R. TREVOR-ROPER

THE DANCE

Studies in Ballet. By WILLIAM CHAPPELL. *Lehmann.* 15s.

William Chappell has been familiar to us as a dancer since the early days of the Ballet Rambert, and either as dancer or stage designer has been continually associated with the Sadler's Wells Ballet. During the war, in which he was one of the first dancers to enlist, we became conscious of him as a writer of imaginative, almost visionary prose; indeed, as a poet. He brings a certain poetic gift to this book, which reveals him also as an acute observer and critic of the art of dancing, and of the ballet world in which he has spent most of his life. He writes very vividly and with considerable grace, though his style at times needs a little of the discipline which he so well describes the dancer as undergoing. His Prologue and Epilogue, for instance, show a rather fidgety self-consciousness which he would be the first to detect in the case of a dancer; but many of his chapters are altogether admirable and he has certainly realised his wish

> to picture in words that essence, the intangibility of which I had realised and wondered at, the subtle atmosphere of the ballet world I had found so ignored in its literature. . . I felt a desire to peel off the disguising surface of that overworked commodity, glamour, and to show that beneath that glutinous covering there is a bone structure, plain, well-built and pleasing in itself. I wanted to describe its infirmities and its visions and some of its needs; and to show, even if incompletely, what dancing is, and what it is to be a dancer.

The chapters on the daily routine and training of a dancer, and one on ballet costume, in which the author is a specialist, have a quite original flavour, and I find the account of the gradual evolution, amounting almost to re-creation, of the dancer's face and figure, particularly fascinating. The growth of the dancer's inner life has never been described with more perception.

> A serious ballerina brings a discipline to bear on her life that would to most people appear grindingly hard. If this be joined with thought, a certain intelligence and natural dancing gifts, it will produce, as time passes, a change in the dancer's appearance that springs from a kind of mental control, and acts on the very set of her features and the lines of her body, endowing these with something that is apart from, and yet affecting her physical shape.

There are many variations on this fascinating theme of the dancer's education, which is something quite different from mere technical proficiency. I can only quote one application of it, to Margot Fonteyn:

> At seventeen, Fonteyn was an enchanting child, with strong natural gifts for dramatic expression, as well as technical ability. She had the freshness, the lightheartedness, the gaiety and also the repose. She lacked, quite naturally, the final radiance which can only evolve from a certain maturity and knowledge. This radiance, invisible to the naked eye, obvious to the mind and senses, is like a glowing extra nerve running all through the framework of a great dancer's body, and becoming more apparent each year as the dancer's work matures. Fonteyn has grown this extra nerve, and to-day when she sets foot on the stage she brings with her a light which is outside the jurisdiction of the electrician.

Everyone will agree that it is not mere rhetoric. If Mr. Chappell is always fervid in speaking of Fonteyn, Fedorovitch and Ashton, he does not lack discrimination. There are some excellent evocations of Frederick Ashton's choreography which one would like the space to quote. But it is a pity that Mr. Chappell, who speaks with such discernment about Balanchine, Nijinska and our English choreographers, has given no attention to Roland Petit, who is certainly one of the most interesting and imaginative of young choreographers. There are two not very good photographs of Babilée and Philippart, and a bare mention of *Les Forains,* but no consideration of the work of the Ballets des Champs Elysées, on which one would have liked Mr. Chappell's opinion.

This exceptionally educative ballet book is charmingly produced, and illustrated by the author's schematised line drawings of dancers, and by some less-known photographs, among which are brilliant portraits of Fonteyn, Karsavina and Nijinska, and an amusing historic group of Lopokova, Ashton, Chappell and Duncan Grant, a beautiful photograph of Spessitsva in the role of Giselle and of Ashton in *Les Masques,* one of his own very early ballets.

One misses any mention of Sally Gilmour, whom, if he had seen her in *Giselle,* Mr. Chappell could hardly have failed to add to the five Giselles to whom he devotes a chapter.

BERYL DE ZOETE

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of our flesh. Perhaps the *Observer* for its weekly "Profile." These Profiles, selected now and revised—how do they bear the translation from Sunday breakfast-time into a book?

Here they are, Baldwin, Churchill, Attlee, Molotov, Aneurin Bevan, Ernest Bevin, Lord Winterton, Lord Keynes, Sir John Anderson, Arnold Toynbee, Sartre, Benjamin Britten, T. S. Eliot, Thomas Mann, and many others; in fact enough extraordinary men, in variety enough, for a modern *Spirit of the Age*.

Few of the Profiles quite do. Few interpret the subjects as well even as journalism could allow in our conditions. The authors are various—that may be the trouble—sometimes journalists, sometimes men of letters or politicians (though always anonymous); sometimes authority seems to speak, sometimes who ever happens to be correspondent in Paris or Washington. The correspondent it must be, one imagines, who cannot trust to himself upon Jean-Paul Sartre: "Specialists say he is a very sound philosopher indeed, and the last word should be with them." Should it? Certainly it should not: the last word should be with the interpreter, as it was always with Hazlitt or with Horne. Indeed men of letters and musicians are always the ones interpreted and delineated the most feebly. Who—journalist or don—tells us (I complain of the way, he tells it) that Gilbert Murray "has linked the feast of reason with the flow of soul?" What innocent affirms that Mr. Eliot has "created the poetic style of the twentieth century" or is "temperamentally a major Bishop?" Or who can have been so unobservant as to think that the first sight of Mr. Benjamin Britten suggests "a junior-partner solicitor, or Civil Servant halfway up the departmental rungs, with a taste for etchings, progressive politics, and week-end tennis?"

The interpretations of the remoter figures of the world, Stalin, Franco, Lord Mountbatten, Pandit Nehru, Mr. Truman—these could have been contrived by any able journalist with the right colleagues and with a good newspaper library at his back; though Mr. Gromyko and Mr. Molotov must have been ironically, indeed lovingly, watched from just across the smooth tables of discussion and disagreement.

There are still left the politicians here at home; and of these the drawing at last is often divertingly excellent. Not of Mr. Churchill; there idolisation had to collect all its usual clichés, there one had to expect to be told about Mr. Churchill's consciousness of "the mysterious unfolding of the scroll of human destiny"; one had to be told again that the great leader was also the great writer. But how nicely, for example, are Lord Baldwin and Sir John Anderson attended to! Lord Baldwin: "His personality always had a fine amber glow. None other could have rounded off his period so unobtrusively." Sir John Anderson: "Wherever Sir John makes his stately progress the fanfare of heralds is faintly audible" and (yet perhaps not meant to be so wicked as it is) "those who know him best can often feel a glow as from a Raeburn portrait."

If to call Mr. Ernest Bevin a "child of nature" is at least a physical and visual slip, how pleasant to be shown Lord Winterton thin in his drainpipe trousers "rapping imperiously on the Westminster kerbstone with a demand that the police stop the traffic" so that he can walk across to the House, or to watch Dr. Summerskill upon a Sunday, "richly typical of the middle wing of English Socialism," taking the Sealyham for a walk through Kensington Gardens, with Prince Albert by no means disapproving.

Adult writes to adult upon the politicians. How is it, in so great a paper as the *Observer*, that mild middle-brow writes to milder indifference in the profiles outside of politics? Do they not also demand a sense of life? It is a little sad; but not surprising. GEOFFREY GRIGSON

FINE WRITING

Perseus in the Wind. By FREYA STARK. *John Murray. 12s. 6d.*

Kinglake, we remember, was unmoved by the splendours of Baalbeck but fell an easy victim to the charm of the desert and wrote a dutiful purple patch in its praise. Since his day many English travellers have shown symptoms of this odd attachment. We are rich in travel literature and no part of the world has received more reverential treatment than the desert lands of the Middle East. We are at home there, but not sufficiently at home to forget our party manners. What is good enough for England is not quite good enough for the sand dunes; our talk has to be more considered. As a result we can show the laboured impressiveness of an *Arabia Deserta*, the self-consciousness of a *Seven Pillars* and (last in the line) the sometimes mannered picturesqueness of the writings of Miss Stark. She has given much pleasure to many people. She has scholarship enough to give some plausible reason for venturing into places so remote that even the R.A.F. has been put to some trouble to extricate her; she has communicated her enthusiasm for such places with marked success—but one has always feared her awful promise to strangle a book with fine writing. On the whole her travel books escape with no worse injury than a wry neck. What happens when she tackles a more tractable *genre* is all too sadly evident in her new book.

Perseus in the Wind is a volume of twenty essays in which Miss Stark gives us her reflections on such subjects as Service, Happiness, Education, Beauty, Death, Memory, Love, Sorrow and Courage. It has to be confessed that her bearing in the presence of these abstractions is irreproachable; indeed, it is frequently admirable. But it is hardly original. Love, we are assured, is a good thing, variety is the spice of life, it is no longer quite the thing for an artist to live in an ivory tower, death comes to all and we do well not to forget the fact. We could accept these reflections in the spirit with which they were offered (for Miss Stark modestly disclaims all intention of being original) were it not that she smothers the most simple statement with figurative language.

Here, for example, are the Ivory-Towerites being reproved.

> The clear-eyed young men who do the work and know it not, give them one glance of disdain and turn away; and we, the average who try to steer in the whirlpools, listen with surprise to the far Olympic voices when they pontificate on Art.

Here are some sad-faced violinists in a restaurant orchestra.

> They, too, must have started out with visions of obedient orchestras and lamplit applause; and listened to Ariel voices in the gossip of the air; until contact not with the real but with the bitter world of men, and their own weakly furnished spirits, flung them like economic driftwood on a bare shore. There, where all, with casual feet, may tread them under, their fragile soul retracts like a sea-creature on its rock when the wave washes out to the sea; and in their weakness they relinquish the artist's honour, the ornament which his own heart alone can buy—they relinquish as far as is in them their readiness to *feel*.

The most striking examples are too long to quote. For a page and a half we are given a detailed account of the habits of silk-worms only to find that this is not the real subject at all (which happens to be Words) but only an elaborate simile. Conversely, the very coining of a phrase (Sorrow stands in our landscapes like the Pyramids in Egypt) is enough to start five hundred words of topographical illustration. "Thus ornament is," as Miss Stark herself quotes, "but the guilèd shore to a most dangerous sea."

P. H. NEWBY

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